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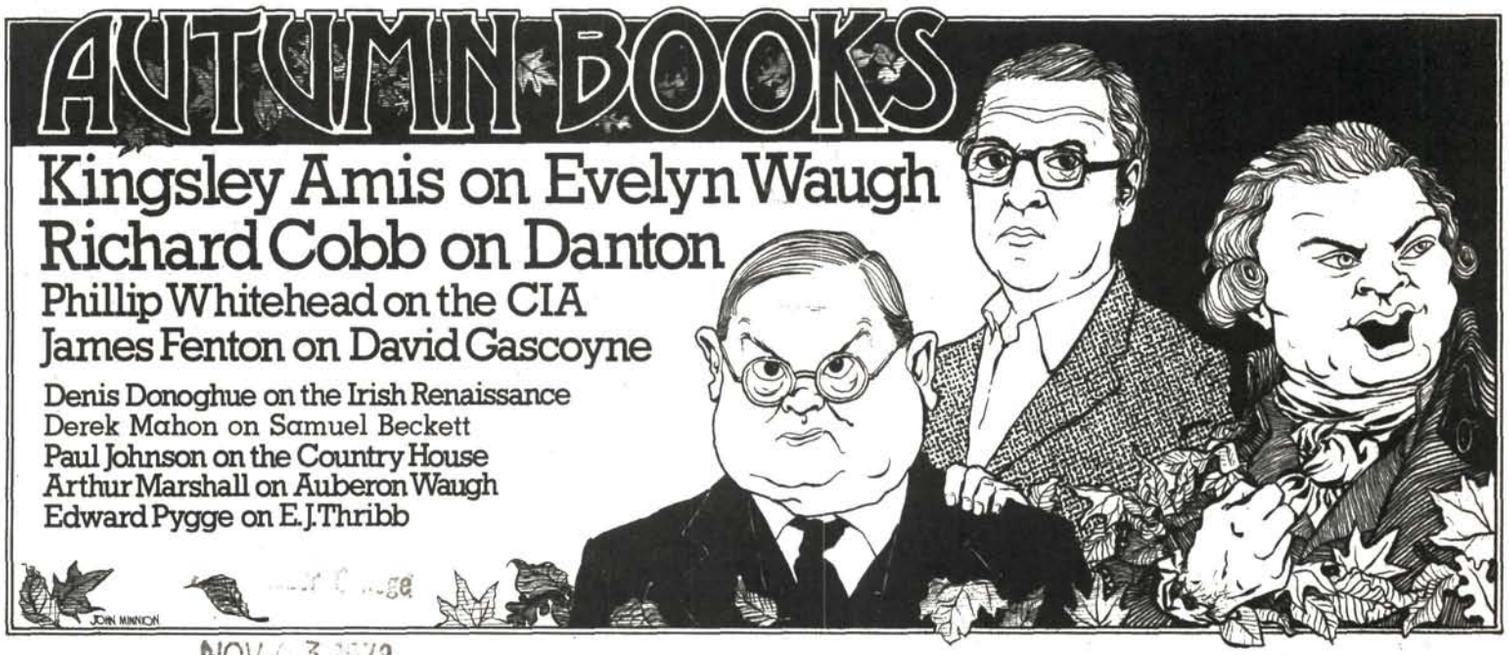
AUTUMN BOOKS
Kingsley Amis on Evelyn Waugh
Richard Cobb on Danton
Phillip Whitehead on the CIA
James Fenton on David Gascoyne
Denis Donoghue on the Irish Renaissance
Derek Mahon on Samuel Beckett
Paul Johnson on the Country House
Arthur Marshall on Auberon Waugh
Edward Pygge on E.J.Thribb
JOHN MINNION

NOV 3 1978

A jury of whose peers?

In cancelling the Official Secrets trial, and ordering a new one to start on Monday, Mr Justice Willis lamented with good reason the waste of public money involved. This waste, he said, resulted from 'gratuitous journalistic gossip' on the part of Christopher Hitchens of the NEW STATESMAN. This is an apportionment of blame which cannot be accepted.

His Lordship stopped the trial because of fears that the jury might be seen as prejudiced – making it clear that there was no reflection on the integrity of any of the jurors involved. On another page, we set out in a little detail what is known of the history of this particular jury: here, we need only mention the essential point that last Wednesday the defence became aware, fortuitously, of the fact that one member of the jury had been in the Special Air Service, and been engaged in intelligence work similar to that which the three defendants were accused of having tried to publicise. The defence, as one might have expected, objected.

By English court-room convention, the jury were sent out of the room so that they should not become aware that the defence lawyers were disturbed by their discovery of the former occupation of one of the jurors. It is worth pausing here to note that in, for instance, the American legal system, no such strange ceremony could have occurred in a court of law.

Automatically, the occupation and background of every juror would be known in advance, and the defence given considerable public liberty to question the attitudes of any particular candidate. It hardly seems an excessive principle, and probably many ordinary British citizens are under the impression that something like it already exists.

However, it does not. The jury were thus ignorant of the defence protest, and ignorant of the fact that Judge Willis, without giving reasons, rejected it. Here, however, a difficulty arose: clearly, the jury's ignorance would only be maintained if the media did not report what had occurred. Our courts are supposed to be open, and it is not perfectly clear that a judge can order suppression of such a matter. In the event, his Lordship asked the press to observe the 'usual discretion'.

In discussing the matter on London Weekend Television, Christopher Hitchens did not alter the reality of relationships inside the courtroom. He did not invent the disquiet felt by the defence: nor was he responsible for the fact that many people concerned with the trial were, inevitably, aware of it. He merely made the public, and the jury, aware of what was going on: it was, in the nature of things, a 'secret' which could not have been long preserved. Whatever else this was, it surely was not 'gossip', which is the discussion of trivialities: how could the revelation of a triviality endanger the certainty of justice?

If wastage of public money is at issue, it is surely more relevant to consider the decision of the prosecution to present, in the new trial, a 'more economical' case. What this amounts to is that they have decided to drop the charges which arise from the collection of information from public sources: having been given a remarkably open-ended fiat by the Attorney-General, the prosecution consumed an enormous amount of effort in trying to make out that material gleaned – for instance – from journals like *RAF News* might be of 'advantage to an enemy'.

An almost equally large volume of effort by the defence – and some masterly cross-examination by Lord Hutchinson, QC – revealed this enterprise as being little more than a large-scale exercise in mystification.

To repeat a point which cannot be too often repeated: this prosecution depends to a great extent upon the Government making use of legislation which it has promised repeatedly not to use. It is disturbing enough that such promises should be set aside. What are we to make of it when the prosecution's own actions demonstrate that the law in question has not only been used, but used with self-evident lack of restraint?

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Notes on Politics and Power

Bingham delivers the goods

Bruce Page writes: Coming when it does, the greatest value of the Bingham Report lies not in its well-anticipated findings, but in the raw documentation which accompanies it. Should any doubt remain of the essential dishonesty of the Government's purpose, it cannot survive examination of the detailed transactions between Shell, BP and Whitehall.

Several of the documents bear on the situation after the notorious 1968 'swap' was arranged – in which the oil companies replaced their former direct sanctions-busting supply to Rhodesia with a system under which the French company Total sent oil into Rhodesia, against equal supplies of British oil made available to Total in South Africa. In their evidence to Bingham, BP described this system as being no more than 'cosmetic'.

Annex II of the Bingham Report is the record of a meeting on 21 February 1968 between (Lord) George Thomson, Commonwealth Secretary, and the oil company representatives, in the presence of a battery of civil servants. The swap having been discussed, some time was spent in ensuring that any Parliamentary questioners could be suitably bamboozled:

> It was agreed that in any statements in the House of Commons or elsewhere, Ministers would be stating the position with complete accuracy if they used a formula along the lines: 'No British company is supplying P.O.L. (petrol, oil or lubricants) to Rhodesia'. If asked whether P.O.L. consigned to the Transvaal by British companies was being diverted to Rhodesia, Ministers could truthfully say something along the following lines: 'We have of course looked into this possibility. We are satisfied that this is not happening.'

In truth, this was a meeting at which oil-company executives, having arranged with the Whitehall executive a system under which they could be *complicit* in the supply of oil to Rhodesia, were further invited to devise the Parliamentary formula behind which that complicity might be concealed.

Perhaps even more remarkable is another meeting between Thomson and the oil companies one year later, with Maurice Foley present as Parliamentary Under-Secretary, and several senior officials. It was occasioned by Portuguese allegations that British oil companies were involved in sanctions-busting. Coarsely paraphrased, the subject of the meeting was: 'Have they rumbled us?'

With the aid of some rather dubious railway dockets, the Portuguese were trying to show that Shell and BP were still sending oil in direct from Mozambique. With relief, it was agreed that the foreigners were barking up the wrong tree – George Thomson commented:

> One would have expected that if they had got wind of the exchange arrangements between Shell/BP and Total (South Africa) they would have regarded this as a sufficiently damaging discovery in itself.

This makes clear that the Government placed an exact, cynical value on its secret arrangements with the oilmen. By extension, one might guess that any British MP who managed to learn what was going on might think it 'sufficiently damaging . . .'

A few paragraphs later, however, the meeting agrees that the swap deal, while 'pretty thin' (Sir Frank MacFadzean of Shell) was 'sound' (Mr James Bottomley, Foreign Office). In view of Sir Harold Wilson's assertion that he did not know what was happening, it is worth noting that this interesting document was copied to (Sir) Michael Palliser, then Sir Harold's private secretary at 10 Downing Street. (The Bingham Report seeks to explain some part of the executive willingness inside Shell to co-operate with Rhodesia and South Africa by saying that the company's formal code abjures them to avoid politics. Sir Frank, however, did not hesitate to inform this meeting of his judgment that the South African Prime Minister was a 'moderate' trying to avoid 'anarchy' on his northern border, or to inform another meeting that Britain's arms embargo against South Africa was inimical to British interests.)

In accordance with his instructions, Bingham makes no accusations of criminal conduct: but there can be no doubt, on a sensible reading of his report, that the law was broken. On the whole, though, the oilmen emerge from his report as more straightforward and honest than the politicians and civil servants.

> To HMG the (swap) arrangement was acceptable because it . . . enabled it to be said that British oil was not reaching Rhodesia. . . . To company representatives, familiar with product exchanges as an everyday fact of the international oil business, the exchange might, like other exchanges, have appeared to be merely an alternative means of making a supply.

There is only one moment when Bingham himself appears to slip into the strange conventions of the people he is investigating. After 1974, the swap arrangement fell through, and Shell Mozambique, a British-registered company, began again to supply Rhodesia direct. It would have been the proper duty of the Shell men concerned, Bingham says

> to satisfy themselves that . . . Shell Mozambique had been removed from the chain of supply . . . (or if it had not, *to seek some alternative expedient*). (Italics added.)

Or even, of course, to have stopped doing it.

The National Front's reptilian aspects

Francis Wheen writes: The National Front emerged as the clear winner in the first round of its battle with the Anti-Nazi League over party political broadcasts. While Peter Hain appeared as the hectoring voice of intolerance, Martin Webster of the NF was able to portray himself on the BBC as the embodiment of sweet reason, as he compared the ANL action with the worst excesses of Nazi book-burning in Germany. There is every reason to suppose the NF will win even wider public sympathy if the broadcasting union ACTT fulfils its threat to 'pull the plug' on NF broadcasts.

Is there not a danger that such disruptive action will make martyrs of the NF? Alan Sapper, general secretary of ACTT, refused to discuss the subject: 'Democracy is threatened,' he told me. 'We don't need to bother with philosophical arguments. We can discuss philosophy until the concentration camps come in.' Yet in 1974, when the NF was allowed a ten-minute broadcast on radio and TV during each of the elections, ACTT did not attempt to impede transmission.

That the ANL's behaviour should result in NF leaders being presented as shining examples of *mens sana in corpore sano* is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that NF pronouncements are not normally noted for their measured tones. In the August issue of *Spearhead*, for example, John Tyndall describes his involvement in a recent *World In Action* programme about the National Front. 'Its producer rang our office one day and announced himself as a Mr Brian Lapping. The name ending suggested a possible Anglo-Saxon origin, though not one I had heard of before.' On arriving at the studio 'one glance at Mr Lapping was enough to convince us that his ancestors originated in lands far from those where Saxon yeoman and bowmen were bred.' The voice of the programme's narrator was 'not a normal human voice; it is a voice that belongs to the catacombs, to dark subterranean alleys of the kind which in 1917 spewed their contents out on to the surface . . . It is the voice of world revolution.' Brian Lapping's acquaintances may be surprised to learn that he is associated with the world revolution.

Tyndall's descriptive faculty scales new heights as he tries to evoke how he felt in the TV studio: 'My overwhelming memory is that of having been in the presence of something vile, unclean, sinister and diabolically evil. The impression with which it leaves one is that of having strayed into an underworld inhabited by creatures of reptilian aspect, covered in a coating of green slime. As my colleagues and I met and talked with the staff of that programme we could not feel that we were dealing with ordinary human beings . . . each of us could feel only that he was facing something satanic, the aura of dark, subversive forces being overwhelming. Here in the alien eyes surrounding us on all sides was the world revolution.'

Trippers take over in West Highlands

Ron McKay writes: The Bealach Na Ba, the Pass of the Cattle, is a single tracked, tortuous road down to the village of Applecross, on an awesomely beautiful peninsula in the West Highlands of Scotland. The Bealach follows the route of an ancient drove road down which the clans and the cattle thieves brought beasts to market. Its rigours have ensured that herds of caravans, campers and second homes have not swamped the peninsula. But the local landlords – Major John and Captain Andrew Wills, of the tobacco family – seem determined to change all this.

The Wills own 85,000 acres – most of the peninsula. They own the hills on which, for a few weeks of the year, they shoot the deer which the local people say overrun the estate. They own the agriculturally sour coastal land

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on which crofters subsist by raising animals and root crops. They live in London and visit the estate only sporadically.

In 1976 another road was built to Applecross. This coastal link, open all the year round, guaranteed the village supplies and medical services. Later, it served the Loch Kishorn oil rig site, which is now closed through lack of orders. The Highland Regional Council was worried that the road could bring to the community 'final destruction at the hands of external interests'. But Applecross Estates – the Wills family company – assured the community that their policy on the sale of land for housing was to favour applicants with local connections and allow 'payments on easy terms'.

In June of this year it became clear that the policy had changed somewhat. Discreet adverts in the *Sunday Times* and *Scottish Field* put six croft houses and a former school owned by the estate up for sale. 'The opening of the new coast road to Applecross has brought on to the market some interesting old croft houses which, in the past, could only be reached by boat or a long walk by footpath.' A Hampshire firm of estate agents handled the sales, which were not advertised in the local press.

The properties, which are in a state of advanced or total decay, have been sold for between £2,500 and £8,000 each. In addition, say Applecross Estates 'thousands and thousands' will need to be spent on them. None have gone to local people, even though a visit to the area by Professor Peter Sadler of Aberdeen University showed there were 'dozens of local people who were looking for houses on the estate'. He adds: 'The estate told us it was their policy to sell crofts to local people. This was obviously totally untrue. Given their protestations about their concern for the local community this is pretty poor.'

Major John Wills has an ingenious explanation. He says the Applecross Estate is now owned by a charitable trust and the monies from the sale will 'go straight into the trust'. The trustees of the newly-formed Applecross trust are Major John and Captain Andrew Wills and their professional advisers. In a remarkable letter sent to all crofters on the estate recently the Major said the trust had been set up by him and his son to avoid Capital Transfer Tax. 'Should anything happen to one or other of us,' he wrote, 'the estate could be sold to overseas buyers or commercially exploited and we are anxious that this should not happen'.

Major Wills told the NEW STATESMAN this week that he and his son were now renting the estate and the mansion house from the Applecross trust at 'a fair rent', decided by two arbiters. He declined to say what that rent was. 'Anyone could have rented the place', he said. But he agreed that it had not been advertised as being available.

Under Scottish law charities are not required to register with the Charity Commissioners. Several of the larger Scottish estates are now owned by charitable trusts set up by the former owners and with them, usually, their accountants and lawyers, as trustees. These trusts enjoy considerable tax concessions and in avoiding death duties and capital transfer tax ensure that the line of succession to the custody and enjoyment of the land is not broken. The composition of the Applecross trust ensures that it will be, barring some unimaginable revolt by the Wills professional advisers, self-perpetuating. In law the estate may have changed hands but, to the crofters of the peninsula, control still lies in the hands of the people in the big house.

Christopher Hitchens writes: Fraternal greetings to our older brother/sister *The Spectator*, which this week celebrates 150 years of continuous publication. Macaulay once said of Sir Richard Steele, whose earlier *Spectator* he admired, that he was 'a scholar among rakes and a rake among scholars' and this tradition still persists in Doughty Street (they give better parties than we Fabians and Marxists and when Graham Greene was literary editor he gave a condom stuffed with Smarties to an unpopular colleague as a Christmas offering). Despite some foolish recent remarks about the future of the weeklies, made principally by Anthony Howard, the current *Spectator* is a paper of considerable verve and although it does not publish its circulation figures it has nothing to fear as a *succès d'estime*.

Occasional relapses into Tory snarling still take place, but a striking fact about the paper has been its civilised approach to politics down the years. The founder-editor, R. S. Rimtoul, was a champion of the Reform Act ('The Bill, the whole Bill and nothing but the Bill') and this wise tradition was continued with support for the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the Union side in the American Civil War. In our own century the paper was against Suez and, until the proprietor Ian Gilmour became a Tory candidate, almost hostile on principle to the Old Gang. Thatcherite prose – if such a thing there be – is allowed its due meed of infiltration these days. But not its head, or not yet by any means. As time presses on towards an election it ought to be recalled that the *Spectator* was for Labour in 1959. While we salute their 150th birthday, our statesmanlike hope is that wise counsels will yet prevail.

Free Speech

Jim's friend

What can have been the reaction of the Shah upon receiving a 'right behind you, brother' communique from the Right Honourable Leonard James Callaghan? A hushed throne-room as the words were read out? A 'stop-press' order to the muzzled Tehran papers? An instruction that the letter should be read out in mosques? Or would it be: 'He's sold us tanks, he's invested in our regime, he's sending up the Queen next year. In God's name, what *won't* he do for us? If this is what he does without being asked, imagine if we were to *demand* something.'

The essence of saying and doing the wrong thing is almost always one of timing, and Callaghan's timing has been exquisite. The letter did not arrive on some state occasion where banal congratulations are forgiveable. It did not arrive just as the riots and police massacres began – which would have been unlucky. It arrived right in the middle of the carnage, and none of its honeyed phrases about 'reform' and 'democratisation' can obscure the fact that it commits Britain firmly to one side while affecting 'neutrality'. The idea that you can walk with kings and not lose the common touch – always an aspiration of Jim's – is just about OK if the king concerned is not laying about the common people with everything he's got. It is an illusion to suppose that you can support both sides until you see which one is winning – as the thirteen gruesome years of our Rhodesia policy show very clearly.

It is even more remarkable that Callaghan should do this with the recent example of Jimmy Carter's Nicaragua *gaffe* so obviously in front of him. Carter wrote to the dictator Somoza, who had just released a prisoner or two, at the precise point where the National Guard were having to be deployed against civilians. His imprimatur of good conduct was, therefore, pinned on the wrong breast at the wrong time. 'Keep up the good work' was not the message which the Nicaraguan people hoped to hear from an American President to their tyrannous foe. So Callaghan's dumb-ox intervention in Iranian affairs does not even have the merit of originality. (And at least the American State Department had the grace to be embarrassed at Carter.)

The whole business of international support for the Shah has to do with a belief that he is modernising his country and that the alternative to him would be worse. It's difficult to think offhand of any dictator who has not claimed these two mitigations, but it is hard to think of one who has been so willingly fawned upon. Often, it seems, the Shah's apologists in this country think of things to say for him that he hasn't even thought of himself yet. It would be nice to know who coined 'Islamic Marxist' as a phrase to describe the rebels – for what could be better designed to appeal to a double Western paranoia? Has anybody ever *met* one of these two-headed eagles? Interviewed one? Filmed one? Met somebody who's met one? If so, they are not saying. The church does seem to have played a big role in the opposition, but that's often the way where political parties are considered what Lord Chalfont calls 'a luxury'.

In any case, from the socialist point of view somebody who has faith in God has at least a certain grace and spaciousness in his beliefs. Somebody who believes in absolute monarchy gets the worst of the divine *and* the mundane. If one *had* to choose . . . but then this is a problem for *The Times*, where they often seem to believe in both at the same time.

Christopher Hitchens

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Anna Coote: The 'loyal' jury and the foreman with firm opinions

The story of the jury which was discharged from the official secrets trial at the Old Bailey this week began late in July. The prosecution applied to Judge Thesiger at the Old Bailey for permission to see the list of citizens selected for jury service, six weeks before the trial was due to begin on 5 September. The application was made *ex parte* which meant that it was effectively secret. An *ex parte* procedure does not require that the defence be present when the application is heard, nor even be notified of the hearing. So the defence had no inkling of it until the day of the trial when Lord Hutchinson, Duncan Campbell's QC, called attention to to fact that the Security Services had had 'an extraordinarily long time' to examine the jury panel. He demanded assurances that 'no political use' would be made of the information gained about jury members; that no member of the jury panel had been approached; and that all 82 jurors on the list had turned up for selection.

John Leonard, QC for the prosecution, insisted that the jury vetting process was perfectly lawful. There was a need, he said, to check that 'jurors . . . hearing evidence in camera . . . were people against whom nothing was known which would indicate against' the safety of letting them hear it. 'Anyone who is known to be disloyal would be disqualified', he explained.

Mr Leonard gave Lord Hutchinson the assurances he required. He then announced, to the surprise of the defence, that the crown would not object to any of the 82 possible jurors on any grounds at all. This was a most unusual step in a major trial.

In fact, only 71 of the 82 listed jurors had turned up but the missing names were supplied to the defence with an assurance that no-one of putative disloyalty had been warned away. 'No-one was found to be potentially disloyal', Leonard explained.

A jury of nine men and three women was quickly selected. The defendants used seven of the nine 'challenges' available to them to reject jurors they didn't like the look of. (Looks were all they had to go on, since *they* had had no chance to vet the panel for 'loyalty'.) The final line-up was a little unusual – and this may have had something to do with the prosecution's forgoing its own right to challenge. The average age was not much more than 30: there was one man in denims with hair well over his shoulders and another smiling broadly in a rugby shirt. It turned out later that one juror had to attend his own trial on a motoring offence during mid-October and another had a string of drug offences.

Nevertheless, the vetting procedure had left the defence with a considerable feeling of unease – and as things stand now it may not have been entirely unjustified. At the end of the first week of the trial, the jurors raised the question of how the Official Secrets Acts affected them. They were listening (in secret) to a taped interview between the three defendants, Berry, Aubrey and Campbell, which was a crucial piece of prosecution evidence. The judge told them the Acts covered anything secret that they heard *in camera* during the trial. But what really aroused the interest of the defence was the admission by two jurors that they themselves had signed the Official Secrets Acts while employed as public servants. Defence lawyers enquired further. Through the judge, the jury revealed that its members who had signed the Acts included one DHSS clerk, an ex-soldier who had been a squadron clerk, and an ex-paratrooper and SAS (Special Air Services) man who had served on internal security work in Malaya, Singapore, Cyprus and Northern Ireland. The same man was selected as foreman of the jury in the first week of the trial. He had frequently been overheard by reporters and lawyers at the Old Bailey holding forth on the subject of his army experiences.

It was an alarming discovery. The SAS is an elite regiment, and its members might be thought to take an especially dim view of an ex-soldier, John Berry for instance, who talked about his experiences. Matters were further complicated by the fact that Duncan Campbell had written a number of uncomplimentary articles about the activities of ex-SAS members, published in the NEW STATESMAN and elsewhere.

> 'He never stopped talking about it, even in corridors and during lunch breaks'

On Thursday morning last week, the three defendants applied for the foreman to be discharged from the jury. (No complaint was made about the other two jurors who had signed the Acts.) The defence claimed that his SAS training, experience and attitudes would deny him the opportunity of coming to the evidence in the case with an open mind. The judge refused the application – and it was this interchange, held in the absence of the jury, which Christopher Hitchens reported on London Weekend Television last Saturday.

On Monday morning of this week, the jury passed a note to the judge telling him they were aware of the accusations of 'prejudice to the three standing trial'. The judge and lawyers remained in conference for five hours: eventually Judge Willis decided on his own initiative to discharge the entire jury. All parties agreed it would be unsafe to allow them to continue with the trial.

It appears to have been a wise decision. The foreman had been seen outside the court holding forth to his fellow jurors. He was apparently wounded by the accusation against him, but he does seem to have been remarkably ill-disposed towards the defendants even before any evidence had been produced. After the jury had been discharged, one member told the NEW STATESMAN that the ex-SAS was from the start the most vociferous of the 12, with firmly-held opinions about the defendants. Before the prosecution evidence had begun he announced that the former soldier John Berry 'should have had a military trial – straight in, fourteen years, straight out'. He pointed out that this would have saved the huge expense of a public trial. Of Campbell he remarked that his information gathering was not done for money, so he must have been intending 'to pass it on to somebody'.

These were not casual remarks or asides. A fellow juror said: 'He never stopped talking about it, even in the corridors and in the canteen during lunch breaks, on and on, trying to convince the other members'. His persistent airing of his opinions, spiced with details of his army experience, became a central feature of jury discussions. He rapidly impressed his views on the others and only one or two seemed to retain a firm opinion that the defendants were innocent since they had not yet been proven guilty. When the time came to elect a foreman, it was he who volunteered for the job.

There is no evidence whatever to suggest that the arrival on the Official Secrets trial jury of an ex-SAS man with some record in intelligence work is anything more than a bizarre coincidence. But why was so much time taken up with vetting the jury panel? Why was the application to see the list made in secret? And why did prosecuting counsel refuse to challenge any jurors at all – even some whom he might perfectly reasonably have thought unsuitable? It's difficult not to guess that the whole vetting business was perhaps an exercise in over-enthusiasm on the part of the security men – which failed to win the confidence of prosecuting counsel, and in the end misfired rather unhappily. Is it reasonable to hope that the exercise will not be repeated?

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David Leitch: Antipodean 'jewel of counter-intelligence'

A rabbit having once met a cobra and survived, would very likely retain a lifetime's obsession with things that crawled. Much in this spirit, one brief Washington encounter in the 1960's with the resonantly named James Jesus Angleton, sometime head of the CIA's counter-intelligence division, and baroque architect of 'Operation Chaos' during the Vietnam war, was enough to keep some third eye in my mind permanently cocked for the faintest intimation of this reptilian personality's subsequent slitherings.

JJA was often sighted, I noticed with curiosity, in the far Antipodes. His Australian forays were always explained in terms of a supposed passion for equine matters in general, and the Melbourne Cup in particular. They were enough to alert Ray Martin a radio reporter for the ABC, local equivalent of our own 'Auntie', and in 1977 JJA rewarded this enterprise with a run-down of his views on the rule of Gough Whitlam between 1972 and 1975.

'Everything (about Labour's rule) worried us', JJA said. 'You don't want the jewels of counter-intelligence being placed in jeopardy by a party that has extensive historical contacts in Eastern Europe, that was seeking a new way for Australia, seeking roads to Peking, when China used to be one of the main bases of the illegal NKVD operations which encompassed Japan, Australia and New Zealand . . .'

Australia, everyone knew, had close links with the USA, and had even sent a contingent, though very small, to the Vietnam war. But 'jewels of counter-intelligence' . . . come, come, I thought, and filed it away, to be used perhaps as an example of what might be called 'spooks' rodomontade.'

An advance copy of a volume entitled 'The Secret State' and some trans-world phone discussion with its author, Mr Richard Hall, has now demonstrated how wrong this dismissive judgment was. As private secretary to Whitlam during the Labour epoch anathematized by JJA, Mr Hall was well placed to verify the reality of Australia's clandestine links, both with the US and, as will be seen, with the UK.

For while, it emerges, Australia's crucial American connexion is largely dictated by geography, and the US requirement to have satellite tracking stations and other installations throughout the Australian continent, its genesis was a matter of history. And, specifically, our wartime development of the ULTRA cipher technique for breaking the German High Command's ENIGMA coding machine.

The Australians were drawn into the electronic spying business because the Japanese used a machine similar to ENIGMA in the Pacific. 'When General MacArthur set up his HQ in Australia in early 1942, Australia went into electronic intelligence on a large scale', Hall writes.

They established a monitoring station at Watsonia near Melbourne (still an important facility nearly 40 years later) and here began 'a collaboration between Australian signals interceptors and cryptographers with their American counterparts which has continued ever since.'

The wartime arrangement was institutionalised in the secret UKUSA agreement of 1947, signed by the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Until then Australia had managed to get by with a set of ad hoc intelligence arrangements, invariably closely connected with the military. But in the light of UKUSA these were thought to be inadequate.

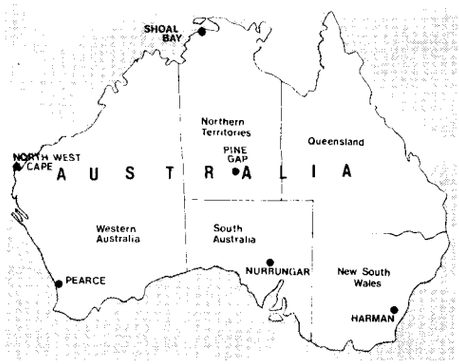
Accordingly, the famous spy-catcher, Percy (later Sir Percy) Sillitoe, and in due course, Roger Hollis, of MI5, set off down-under to show the locals how it was all done. From these humble beginnings emerged two organisations: firstly, ASIO, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, founded in 1949 to handle internal security and counter-espionage, and ASIS, the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, the espionage organisation set up under the Department of Foreign Affairs and modelled on the British SIS.

From UKUSA grew the Defence Signals Division (DSD), a ciphering and monitoring organisation within the Defence department. Its staff worked, and, Mr Hall says, continues to work, with its US counterpart, the National Security Agency; the UK agency known as GCHQ, and CBNRC, the Canadian agency.

Over the years, Hall continues, DSD stations sprouted all over Australia from Shoal Bay (near Darwin) to Pearce in Western Australia, Carbarlah in Queensland and Harman near Canberra. The old faithful Watsonia continued operations in the Melbourne area and overseas facilities appeared in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Papua-New Guinea.

'DSD uses American jargon', Hall discloses. 'SIGINT is the abbreviation for Signals Interception which is divided into COMINT (Communications Interception) which deals with diplomatic and military communications and ELINT (Electronic Intelligence) which collects material on missile telemetry, radar and other technical devices.'

In due course the inexorable process of electronic escalation led to the establishment by the USA of their own bases on Australian soil, the first at Pine Gap, near Alice Springs, in the continent's empty centre, and then at North-West Cape, situated, as the name suggests, on one of its peripheries. Here, Hall says, the American NSA have 'primary responsibility', but:



'There are also CIA personnel, and there is often confusion about who is NSA and who is CIA, even among the Australians working for them.'

How important are these stations to the USA?

'Without these facilities the US ability to communicate with Polaris-carrying submarines in the Indian Ocean would be impaired; likewise its capacity to monitor Soviet, Chinese and French missile testing; its capacity to detect early enough (90 seconds after firing) any offensive missile directed at the US halved; and its photographic satellite surveillance capacity reduced, particularly over S-E Asia and China. The installations have also provided uniquely placed R and D facilities for military space technology, especially laser-beam experimentation, and almost certainly provided a site for eavesdropping communications between Moscow and the Soviet Pacific fleet.'

North-West Cape, which was built in 1966 and is currently being enlarged, has 'provided communication facilities for the Indian Ocean Polaris submarine fleet which commanded the industrial areas east of the Urals . . . It was through North-West Cape that those submarines were put on full nuclear alert during the Middle East war in October, 1973, an alert due, it may be noted, to an NSA misreading of Arabic in a Syrian message to the USSR which led Kissinger and Nixon to believe that Soviet troops might be sent to the Middle East.'

The two bases are also, Hall says, of crucial importance to the US spy satellite network: 'Only two complexes in the world receive, process and transmit satellite data to the centres of US military and the White House. These are Pine Gap (linked to a station in South Australia called Nurrungar) and a station at Buckley, in California.

'Broadly speaking, Pine Gap controls and directs 647 satellites, while Nurrungar receives the data and transmits it to the USA via a separate military communications satellite network.'

How important are these stations to the US? 'Since 1969 Australian bases have been essential to the security and survival of the US and her allies against missile attack'.

Theoretically all this data is of the utmost secrecy, classified under a special security classification called 'UMBRA'. In practice:

'Just as Soviet satellites are able to monitor all the DSD stations on Australian soil, so too have they been able to keep abreast of the operation details of Program 647. Further, in the SALT discussions, the two super-powers have exchanged information on their verification capacities, so Moscow know infinitely more about the Australian-based facilities than the average Australian MP.'

Thanks to Mr Hall, one sees why JJA spent so long following form in Australia.

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Bruce Page: Taking risks with microchips

It's possible that the future of Britain's latest venture into socialist – or anyway, national – enterprise might be settled by a ruling during the next few weeks from a court sitting in Dallas, Texas. Generally speaking Sir Leslie Murphy and his staff at the National Enterprise Board are confident that the right – that is, their own side – will win. But lawsuits, like warfare, are the province of uncertainty.

In June, the NEW STATESMAN disclosed that a complex debate was going on inside the Cabinet over the NEB's plan to invest in the exciting, not to say feverish business of microprocessors. The argument was not really about whether Britain ought to get involved in microprocessors – which, by any sensible account, are likely to revolutionise the industrial and economic landscape – as over the political morality of the means employed. This was for the NEB to finance, with public money, a brand-new company in which a team of entrepreneur-designers would have substantial stockholdings.

The result of success would be not only to give Britain a new industry, but to give the world several new multi-millionaires. Having communed with its conscience, Cabinet accepted the argument that there was no other way of persuading people with the necessary skills to break away from the American companies which have so far dominated the microprocessor industry.

Equipped with an initial £25 million, the NEB put into action some quietly-laid plans for a raid into the heartland of US ultra-technology. Its new-born microelectronics firm, Inmos Ltd, has on its board one of the founding executives of the Texas firm Mostek Corp., and has taken five of Mostek's designers – including a physicist named Dr Paul Schroeder who is probably the most potent designer of microprocessor circuits available in the world today.

Mostek has responded with a huge and costly lawsuit against Inmos, into which the NEB would be joined if Mostek's lawyers could devise a suitable means. The complaint of principle is that Inmos is alleged to be stealing Mostek's trade secrets: tactically, however, the purpose of the suit is obviously to gain time. Mostek are seeking an injunction to prevent Paul Schroeder doing any design work for the British until the trade-secret case is decided. Granted the speed at which lawsuits work, that date will be several years away. And, granted the rate at which technology proceeds, the race for the next great goal in the microprocessor market – the production of the first '64K RAM chip' – will be all over by then.

It is intriguing to see the agencies of a socialist government engaged in swash-buckling entrepreneurial conflict, while on the sidelines the *Financial Times* and the City establishment make sniffy noises about the need for caution. Of course, there is a good deal of rhubarb about how much wiser it is to leave complex technological decisions to the commercial instinct of the ordinary businessman, but the truth is that neither private nor public investment has achieved much of an innovative record in Britain lately.

A hundred news bulletins have now described microprocessors, reasonably enough, as devices which pack the information-handling capacities of a substantial computer into a 'chip' rather smaller than the nail on your little finger. The question is just how much can be packed into a reliable, mass-produced chip: the game started with 1K (kilobit) memories, and has now passed through 4K and 16K, which, on the principle of quadrupling every few years, makes 64K the next step.

The ability to design these intricate little packages is not one that many people possess. While working for Mostek, Paul Schroeder produced both the dominant 4K design, and the dominant 16K design – to the great, and so far enduring prosperity of Mostek. It is therefore understandable that his old employers should be following his future career with obsessive interest. Their injunction argues that if Schroeder and his new colleagues should enable the British firm to get in first with an equally potent 64K chip, then the damage to Mostek will be irreparable.

Ever since the news about the NEB's venture, reports in the trade and financial press have insinuated gently that Inmos was unlikely to be an effective competitor for the lean and agile forces of traditional capitalism. GEC have announced their own more orthodox decision to reap the benefits of the microprocessor revolution by going into partnership with a major American firm, Fairchild. Another large American firm, Texas Instruments, has declared that it will have a 64K chip on the market next year – before Inmos, which doesn't even have a factory yet, can hope to get its act together. The sound and fury of the Mostek lawsuit, however, suggests that the NEB may after all have made a rather impressive competitive judgment.

Mostek, also, are claiming that they will be in production with a 64K design next year – and if so, the race is effectively over. But in that case, why the lawsuit? It's unusual to hear protests coming from a team which is certain of victory.

The likelier case is that no-one really knows when the first really workable circuit will appear – not inconceivably, it might appear from a Japanese contestant not yet engaged in the battle. In theory, a great many people know how it can be done: in practice, victory will go to the team which makes the best decisions about the relationship between performance, reliability and cost of manufacture. They are, to put it mildly, decisions which require expertise: a 64K circuit is made up of lines not much thicker than the wavelength of light, so that the optical systems used in manufacture are tested to their limits; once manufactured, the chip's memory cells are small enough for their reliability to be affected by low-level radioactivity of the sort that exists in every ordinary environment.

So far, the record of the microprocessor industry suggests that small, new firms are better than established corporations at making this kind of judgment. (Apparently, a microcircuit design team needn't be large, but it must be in a high state of excitement.) This is not too surprising: but why does it turn out that public, rather than private capital is now more sympathetic to the entrepreneurial cause?

One reason is that the 'entrance fee' has risen a lot in the last few years. When classic microchip firms like Mostek and Intel began their careers, a few million dollars was all that was required – and in the sixties, a design team with bright ideas rarely had trouble finding adventurous individuals with the money about their persons. Today, the £25m. capital of the NEB's Inmos (with another £25m. to come) appears adequate, but not luxurious: few individuals could envisage such a commitment, and American capital-gains tax is enfeebling the once-vigorous race of individual capitalists.

Oil companies, and other cash-rich mega-corporations are potential investment sources, of course – and there is at least one microchip company called Zilog, started by Exxon, to prove it. But generally speaking such huge industrial empires are unwilling to yield the inducement which has so far been most effective in calling for micro-creative effort: that is, large equity shareholdings for the creators themselves.

In this sort of context, the British national investment concern perhaps appears as the old-fashioned individual gambler writ large. The NEB can deploy money on a scale comparable to that of a middle-sized oil company – but, having no established shareholders to protect, it has no inhibitions about handing out large equity stakes. It's significant that when Dick Petrits, who was one of the original cast at Mostek, began to think about the new package that has now turned into Inmos, he found himself negotiating with two other national government agencies, before deciding that the National Enterprise Board looked the most attractive.

Assuming that Inmos can somehow overcome Mostek's attempt to zap its design team, there seems to be no obvious reason why it shouldn't succeed. Microprocessor production needs a good deal of skilled labour, from PhDs in mathematics to youngsters with qualifications like HNC: in our present economy, such people are all too freely available, and are very much cheaper to hire than are their Texan and Californian equivalents.

Given the means employed, success for Inmos might cause a few twinges on the Labour left. But the real problem will be for the Tories, who have said that in office they would order the NEB to sell off any *successful* investments to the private sector. If Inmos succeeds, it will be because the public sector took a risk that the private sector declined.

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To escape the repression of her life in the Channel Isles, Lillie le Breton, daughter of the Dean of Jersey, marries Edward Langtry because she is impressed by his apparent status. He turns out to be a disappointing husband and a clumsy lover.

Bertie, Prince of Wales, becomes Lillie's lover. She is the first publicly acknowledged mistress of the heir to the throne and is able to enjoy the recognition of her liaison, defy convention and still command the respect of society.

Oscar Wilde – witty, charming and so much in love with Lillie that he sleeps on her doorstep – is one of many poets, painters and distinguished men who were captivated by Lillie's beauty.

As the mistress of the Prince of Wales, Lillie Langtry appears to have reached the pinnacle of success. But her liaison marks only the beginning of a remarkable, scandalous and daring series of adventures in open defiance of the accepted morals of Victorian-Edwardian society, and a theatrical career that leads her to become the highest paid actress in the world.

The story of Lillie Langtry is the subject of London Weekend Television's 13 part series LILLIE, with Francesca Annis as Lillie Langtry and also starring Anton Rogers as Edward Langtry, Denis Lill as Bertie, Prince of Wales, Peter Egan as Oscar Wilde and Jennie Linden as Patsy Cornwallis-West.

Starting on ITV at 8.15 on Sunday September 24th

LWT
London Weekend Television

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Timothy C. Niblock: Libya – the emergence of a revolutionary vanguard

Events in Libya tend to be reported in British papers with a mixture of antipathy and patronising amusement. Any new eccentricity of Colonel Muanmur al-Qadhafi, or any far-fetched whisper of links with international terrorism, evokes publicity and titillating comment. Developments of genuine significance, meanwhile, remain unreported and unexplained.

Unknown to most of the British press, a social revolution is getting under way in Libya. Some aspects of this social revolution – specifically the class struggle involved in it – seem to be little publicised by, and little welcome to, Libyan officialdom itself. A widespread redistribution of wealth and power has been initiated over the past six months, and the next meeting of the General People's Congress – in November – will almost certainly extend and accelerate the process.

Resolution No. 4 (1978), issued by the General People's Congress in March, determined that landlords (whether individuals or private real estate companies) be dispossessed. No one should own more than one housing unit. The social significance of this resolution is considerable. Investment in real estate has accounted for some 41 per cent of all private investment in Libya over recent years. The investment has proved very profitable, and has constituted the main instrument whereby Libyans with accumulated funds have been able to further strengthen their privileged position in society – a crucial factor in the determination of the class structure. Committees are now redistributing ownership titles among the previous tenants. The delight of the latter is understandable: in recent years rents have been oppressively high for the 30 per cent of town-dwelling Libyans in privately-rented accommodation.

What is happening now in Libya is characteristically different from the pattern set in the first eight years after 1969. The radicalism of the earlier period was limited to issues which did not adversely affect any major segment of the Libyan population: a militant foreign policy, the expulsion of British and American bases, the repatriation of the Italian community, the taking over of the oil installations, and the nationalisation of banks and insurance companies. The policies now under implementation will directly affect the relative economic standing of different sectors of the population. Some will gain by them, others will lose.

The expropriation of the landlords and the commercial bourgeoisie in Libya is anomalous. The usual complaints of the expropriated are irrelevant. None can complain of property being 'stolen', for the immense wealth of Libya enables full compensation to be paid for property confiscated. Nor can bourgeois economists shudder at the 'severe effects' which expropriation will have on the economy, through the unwillingness of private investors to risk their capital. Private investment plays a minimal role in the Libyan economy, accounting for only 13.4 per cent of total investment, and in the crucial fields of agriculture and industry the private sector's share only comes to 6.9 per cent and 2.7 per cent respectively. The state-financed oil industry guarantees the continued buoyancy of the economy.

The elements of class struggle which are now present in Libya are treated with some embarrassment in official circles. The Green Book of Muanmur al-Qadhafi, comprising the leader's ideology, states that the suppression of one class by another is undemocratic. Yet this is precisely what is now occurring. The contradiction is camouflaged through emphasis on persuasion: the privileged are being persuaded to accept what is in the interests of the whole people. Abu Bakr Abulkheir, secretary of the influential union of engineers, describes the principal role of his union as 'ensuring that engineers think of themselves primarily as Libyan citizens, and only secondarily as engineers'. Engineers have been prominent among those who have been able to accumulate funds and reinvest, but 'when they are encouraged to participate in the People's Congress they lose any desire to be privileged elements in society; they become one with the people'. The reality of the suppression of the commercial and property-owning bourgeoisie nevertheless remains.

Religious leaders have been prominent in giving expression to criticism. The unusual phenomenon of a theological debate between the political leadership and the religious leadership has resulted from this. Returning from a visit to Eastern Europe at the beginning of July, Muanmur al-Qadhafi convened a meeting of prominent Islamic divines to discuss the growing chorus of criticism. An intensely-argued confrontation followed. The basic criticism raised was that the Hadith (the collection of sayings attributed to the prophet) explicitly forbade policies of the kind now being pursued; references were copiously cited. Al-Qadhafi responded by providing Quranic references justifying the policies, insisting that the authority of the Quran is higher than that of the Hadith. After the meeting, articles in the press denounced 'religious leaders who interpret religion in strange ways'.

Paradoxically, the social elements which provide the backbone of resistance to current policies are themselves the creation of the Libyan revolution. Before 1969 the internally-distributed gains from Libyan oil went largely to the royal family and those whom the royal family cared to patronise; to government employees, whose incomes rose steeply and accounted for 12 per cent of Gross Domestic Product by 1969: and to a small and largely foreign petit-bourgeoisie, comprising those dealing in import-export, real estate and contracting. The petit-bourgeoisie was bound to be small, for much of the import-export and contracting business was in the hands of foreign corporations, as also was the manufacturing sector. The experience and international contacts of the Italian community in Libya effectively ensured that few Libyans could join this grouping.

Following 1969 conditions favoured the rapid growth of the Libyan petit-bourgeoisie. The expulsion of the Italian community in 1970, the rapid developments in the agricultural and economic sectors, the restrictions placed on the activities of

Unless the revolution goes in here, it's useless

Mohamed Zwawe is one of Libya's political cartoonists. His work appears in the Al-Sajar Al-Jadid.

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Muanmur al-Qadhafi

foreign corporations, and the emphasis given to developing the service and housing sectors all provided golden opportunities for Libyans to move into trade, real estate, petty consumer production, and the provision of service facilities. Those with accumulated funds (mainly civil servants and petty traders), therefore, now emerged as businessmen, owners of small manufacturing and service workshops, and dealers in real estate. The Libyan petit-bourgeoisie, in short, was created by the 1969 revolution. In the words of Farid al-Limoushi, '. . . Before the revolution, these people were little different from the rest of the poverty-stricken population: now they have emerged as an economic elite'. The paradox is that this is the class from which opposition is emerging.

The spring which has set in motion the current trend towards a more socialist line of policy is the publication, at the beginning of this year, of the second part of Muanmur al-Qadhafi's Green Book, entitled 'The Solution of the Economic Problem'. It is perhaps surprising that a coherent strategy for attaining socialism could emerge from this work, for much of it is confused and confusing. Considerable space is devoted to the just distribution of the gains from production. These gains, we are told, should be divided equally between those who provide the labour, those who provide the capital, and those who provide the raw materials. How this could lead to an equitable distribution of the fruits of production, when raw materials can constitute anywhere between 5 per cent and 95 per cent of the costs of production, is not made clear.

Yet the book, with its random mixture of anarchism, populism, Marxism and Islam, contains some perceptive insights and some rational policy prescriptions. Wage-labourers, we are told, are slaves; for whether the economic installations which employ them are privately-owned or state-owned, wage-labourers are equally conscious of working for someone else. They are equally alienated from their own production. The solution is to make workers partners in production, holding both the ownership and the control of the installation in their hands. Economic production, therefore, should take place either in socialist corporations (in agriculture and in industry) where the workers are partners; or in individual units where the worker (a peasant or an artisan) owns his means of production and works by himself.

The views expressed and the prescriptions made in the Green Book range wide. Housing is too basic a necessity to be owned or controlled by someone who does not reside in the house: all families, therefore, have a right to own one unit of housing, and none should own more than one. Paid domestic service is degrading to human beings; it should be brought to an end. Professional skills may earn remuneration, but not if other members of society are thereby deprived of their rightful shares in the fruits of production.

The Declaration on the Establishment of People's Power, issued by the General People's Congress in March 1977, states that 'undisputed power shall be held by the people' and that this power 'shall be exercised through people's conferences'. The people's conferences, then, are the forums in which popular opinion is supposed to find expression and make itself effective. All adult Libyans have the right and the duty to participate in this process. Every major issue of national policy must be debated by these conferences, which then pass resolutions defining majority opinion on the issues in question. When a majority of conferences express a common view, the General People's Congress (or its secretariat) is obliged to instruct the executive institutions accordingly.

The most fundamental question now facing the Libyan revolution, however, is whether the current political framework will require adaptation as the process of social and economic transformation moves ahead. There can be few cases where a transformation of this nature has been achieved without an ideologically-committed political party playing a leading role. The party raises the level of consciousness of the underprivileged, unifies them and counters the conspiracies of those who would seek to abort the revolution. But Libya has no political parties. The Green Book sees political parties as barriers which stand between the people and the exercise of power. The people, it is contended, should exercise power directly; they do not need organisations which claim to represent them but in fact come to oppress them.

There are already signs that the political system may be developing new attributes to cope with the challenge which lies ahead. Groups of committed intellectuals, students and workers have come together in spontaneous 'revolutionary committees'. These committees are seeking to raise the political consciousness of the population, especially where people's conferences seem to be influenced by traditional or petit-bourgeois ideas and individuals. They do, in fact, constitute the elements from which a revolutionary vanguard could emerge, albeit currently spontaneous, unorganised and unstructured.

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Brian Wilson: How long will the SNP back Labour?

Much false fury was engendered by the Prime Minister's decision not to hold an October election, and no cries of 'shame', 'chicken' and 'foul' were less convincing than those which came from the Scottish National Party. It seems certain that if there had been an October election, the SNP would have lost most of their eleven seats. This impression is confirmed by an opinion poll, published by the Glasgow Herald last week, which shows Labour with an astonishing 52 per cent of the Scottish vote, against 24 per cent for the Tories and 18 per cent for the Nationalists.

Putting on the bravest available face the party's chairman, Mr William Wolfe, said that the poll had already been 'overtaken by events' and forecast that the government's 'disgrace' would result in a swing back to the SNP. At present, it is doubtful if Mr Wolfe has the remotest idea how the change in circumstances can be turned to his party's advantage. But it is certainly true that it has been given a reprieve.

Following the 'no election' announcement the SNP headquarters in Edinburgh were inundated with telephone calls from branches round the country, demanding that there should be no pact, agreement or alliance with Labour. The organisational strength of the party lies in its branch network – every town and village in Scotland has one – with the result that non-urban constituencies have a very strong influence on party thinking.

In the backwoods of Banff, Argyll and East Perthshire there was instant apoplexy at the prospect of the SNP being seen to prop up a Labour government. The party activists reckoned, probably with complete justification, that such a posture would attract to the SNP in these areas the same kind of disenchantment that the Liberals have already suffered from in England.

When Mrs Margo Macdonald offered the impromptu view in a newspaper interview that the SNP would keep Labour in power in return for commitments on referendum and assembly election dates, she was rounded upon by her country comrades. Her old adversary in the 'Queen of Scots' stakes, Mrs Winifred Ewing, said that Mrs Macdonald had no authority to speak for the parliamentary party.

There are hard-liners in the SNP ranks, like Messrs Douglas Crawford, Douglas Henderson and Gordon Wilson – none of whom would be out of place in a tartan version of the Monday Club. Their current position is that the party should be seen to oppose the government at all opportunities and precipitate the earliest possible general election, whatever the price. This school of thought does not accept that there can be any mileage for the SNP in 'demanding' referendum and assembly dates for the simple reason that the (small) section of the Scottish public which is interested in such matters is rightly convinced that the government is going to deliver these goods without any further prompting.

The SNP is, however, unlikely to follow the hard liners single-mindedly. As long as opinion polls and local government by-elections are indicating that the SNP are faring badly their most likely strategy is to vote against the government on non-crucial issues while supporting it in votes of confidence. Meanwhile, they will hope that something will turn up that might restore their fortunes among the electorate. The fear among some of the party leaders is that the group will split in its Commons voting tactics, with the hard-liners concerned mainly with maintaining their local anti-Labour credentials.

The devolution referendum will not take place until February since the government will not entertain the recall of Parliament to allow an October or November poll. For Scottish voters, the real prospect exists of a referendum, followed by a general election, assembly elections, and European elections all within four or five months.

The fact that the referendum is now likely to precede a general election presents a dilemma for the substantial body of Labour opinion in Scotland which will be voting 'no'. The Labour 'vote no' campaign had intended to keep its powder dry until after a general election, so as to avoid charges of disloyalty. But those who see the whole assembly exercise as constitutional folly which will have the side-effect of restoring the SNP to sound health are unlikely to keep their mouths shut during the referendum campaigning, just because a general election is still in the offing.

Anna Coote: Adopting on leave

A young woman awaiting the arrival of her first baby was disappointed to receive news from her employer early this year that 'At present there appears no question of maternity leave, or anything like its equivalent'. Shiela Patton had worked for the London Borough of Camden for 15 years, so she was particularly chagrined to read in the *Guardian* ten days later that Camden Council had signed a new agreement with its employees 'sufficient to satisfy the most ardent feminist' – for 40 weeks' maternity leave, 16 on full pay and 24 on half pay.

What set her apart from other women (who are entitled to a statutory minimum of 29 weeks' leave, six paid, even if they don't work for Camden) was that she was adopting her baby. Adoptive parents have no statutory rights to leave, paid or otherwise and no-one had thought of including them in the Camden agreement.

Ms Patton's claim was taken up by her union, Nalgo. Six months later, just a few days before her seven-week-old daughter Ellie was delivered to her, she learnt that the Chief Executive had agreed to grant her 'special leave for a period of 29 weeks', five on full pay and the rest on half pay. By all accounts she is the first adoptive mother to receive paid maternity leave. And as is so often the case when one-off victories of this kind are won, she had the advantage of being an articulate, middle-class woman, employed by a relatively enlightened authority (as a senior social worker) with a strong trade union to back her. While her success should set a useful precedent for Nalgo members and for Camden employees in particular, prospective adopters in other circumstances cannot expect the same treatment.

It was not merely an oversight that adoptive parents were left out of the maternity provisions of the Employment Protection Act. 'They were deliberately excluded', said a spokesman of the Department of Employment. He explained that there were two parties involved in an adoption, the adopter and the 'natural' mother: both could not be allowed to benefit from the same birth and the statutory provisions were 'geared to confinement'.

As Sheila Patton and other adoptive parents are well aware, the business of settling an adoptive child into its new home takes infinite care and patience. It may be an exciting and joyful experience, but it is often exhausting and traumatic, and it consumes a prodigious amount of time. The supply of healthy babies unwanted by their natural parents has diminished so rapidly of late that most adoptions are of older or handicapped children who demand even more of their new parents' time and attention.

Tony Hall, Director of the Association of British Adoption Agencies, says that the case for including adopters in statutory provisions for parental leave is overwhelming. 'If anything, they bear *more* responsibility and expense than natural parents. Their needs are somewhat different, of course, but there is no reason why there should not be a flexible arrangement for paid leave.' The cost to the state would be relatively small, since the annual rate of adoptions has slumped from 20,000 three years ago to around 12,000.

The same could be said of extending National Insurance benefits to adopters. Sheila Patton has paid full NI contributions throughout her working life. If she had actually given birth to Ellie, she would have been entitled to maternity allowance at £14.70 for eighteen weeks and a grant of £25 (to cover clothes and equipment which Ellie certainly needed). As it was, she got no money at all from the State.

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Sex discrimination in schools

'This book is for boys'

The Sex Discrimination Act was meant to stop unequal treatment in education. The knowledge that girls go to metalwork classes and boys learn cookery makes many of us glow with pride. But things are not as they should be, as shown by these first-hand accounts, taken from next month's edition of the feminist magazine Spare Rib*.*

The sexism at my school does not seem so blatant, because the boys are allowed to do cookery and needlework, and the girls do woodwork and metalwork. However I have discovered that sexism gets everywhere. In a history lesson we were learning about Mohammed and Islam. The (male) teacher asked me if I would like to be a Muslim. I said no, and he asked why. Apart from the fact that I am an atheist and saw no reason to change my religion, I said that I did not agree with purdah and male chauvinism. He said, 'Are you one of those women's libbers, then girl?' I said yes, to which he replied: 'Oh mah gawd, we've got a right one 'ere.' I thought I must be some sort of crank because everyone, including the other girls, laughed. I only had a vague idea of what 'women's lib' was, but I knew I supported it because the 'women's libbers' everyone hated were the only people who didn't want to stop me doing things I considered worthwhile just because I was a girl.

There's a history teacher at our school who never stops insulting women. He says we never stop 'gossiping' – he never shuts up himself. Recently he gave us a test, and worked out that the average boys' mark was 1-5 higher than the average girls'. He said this proved that men are superior to women. How stupid can you get?

In an art lesson once the (female) teacher said: 'Today we are going to draw aeroplanes. The ladies (sic) may like to draw birds instead.' I drew an areoplane. In a geography lesson, the (male) teacher complained about my untidy map, saying, 'I thought girls were supposed to be able to draw neatly.' There are innumerable examples of teachers making this sort of remark.

At my school the headteacher, the deputy head, and the heads of block are all males. There's a senior mistress, but all she does is to tell the girls off for wearing the wrong colour blouse or something. Last year, all the fourth year girls had to attend a lecture on the follies of wearing high heeled shoes. The boys didn't have to go! To make this even more patronising, the lecturer was a man. If this happens again next year we shall try to organise a boycott.

I once went through my school physics book and counted 80 pictures of people doing experiments. Only one of these was a girl, all the rest were male. In the series of French books used at our school from first to fifth year, the girls are always shown staying at home helping their mothers with the housework, while the boys are out fishing and their fathers are at work.

There is a great deal of opposition to feminism among the pupils as well as the staff. The boys just laugh at it, and often make it clear that they don't like us trespassing on male preserves like the metalwork room. The girls are afraid of being ridiculed if people think they are 'women's libbers' – they never say feminist. When I ask people why they are sexist, they always say that people are different, and if we had equality, everyone would be the same. They don't seem to realise that the individuality of women – and men too – is suppressed by sexism.

Sarah, 14 years, Middlesex

I have recently moved to Leeds and am attending a Middle School. During my time here I have been put out a little by the attitudes of some of the teachers towards the girls. In the games lessons the girls have a choice: rounders, tennis and sometimes volleyball in the summer, and in the winter hockey and netball. But the boys have a much more varied choice: rounders, tennis, softball, volleyball and cricket in the summer, and rugby or football in the winter. A lot of girls fancy cricket and football, and even rugby. The boys laugh at us – it's not surprising really. They would win in a game because no-one will teach us. My friend and I decided to ask our games master if we could learn. I saw him in the dinner line, and I asked him about the girls playing football etc. He gave a surprising answer. 'Have you been listening to the radio?' 'No,' I said. 'Well, as long as I'm running the games around here, the girls won't do any of the boys' games.'

But even if we cannot play football we are expected to read about it. When we were given our class reading book, the class went in uproar – the girls did anyway. The book was called *The Goalkeeper's Revenge*, and when sifting through it, I saw a paragraph saying, 'This book is for boys, about boys. Rugby, fighting, trolley driving and football.' That is typical of my school's opinion on girls – we are classed second, while the boys must have what suits them.

Although there are mixed classes for needlework, cookery and woodwork, the work we do is different. In needlework, the girls have to make aprons, and the boys make ties or cravats. This is stupid, because both boys and girls need aprons for cookery. So when we asked the teacher the reason for this, she replied: 'The girls are willing to stay in at breaks and finish their aprons, while the boys would like to go out and play football.'

I would like the opportunity next year to do all subjects which I am interested in, but am barred from at present. Instead I am being guided towards girl subjects which usually end up in family care and child care. I know there is a recognisable movement against all these things which degrade us and exclude us. Soon something's going to happen to make it right for us, but it may take time.

Debra, 12 years, Leeds

I go to an all girls' school. At our assembly in the morning the headmistress announces that our netball team has lost 23-0 to another school and concludes: 'Both teams played well.' The point that we have no constructive criticism is put to a few teachers by some of us. We point out that our brother school has criticism of this kind and that seems to be beneficial. 'Oh, but girls would be upset by that', is the answer.

My friend and I try to bring up the subject of stereotyping in girls in a discussion. The other girls refuse to believe that they shave their legs and wear mascara and want to marry as soon as possible for fear of becoming old maids, as a result of conditioning. Even the teacher refuses to accept our argument.

There's the inevitable discussion at break about what eye shadow so-and-so wears, and sniggers that what's-her-name doesn't wear a bra. 'She must be a women's libber!' I show them *Spare Rib*. They flick through it and say, 'Where's the John Travolta pin-up?' They show me their magazines in a tone that suggests that I should be humoured, tell me that I can take them home to read and see what I should do with my hair and skin, and what clothes to buy to be fashionable.

At home the struggle continues: I have to help my mother (who works full time as a nursery nurse) get through the housework when she gets home, while my father watches the television. If I remark on this I get a lecture based on the sixth commandment, 'honour thy father and mother . . .'

I've practically given up watching television. The majority of the programmes subtly tell me how I should behave to make a success of my life, and make me sick.

Viv, 13 years, Romford

**Obtainable from 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1, 35p plus postage.*

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Washington Diary

☐ For thirteen incredulous days, the superstars of the Washington press corps cooled their elegantly shod heels in an American Legion post at Thurmont, Maryland. Accustomed to a rich diet of backgrounders, briefings and leaks, the reporters found themselves banting. Their only sustenance was a daily briefing from the president's press secretary, Jody Powell. Never has an important news event in Washington been kept under such tight management.

Only once did the mask slip. Tip O'Neill, Speaker of the House of Representatives, blurted out that the White House had called and asked him to arrange a joint session of Congress for Monday – and then almost immediately called back to cancel the request. The cancellation sounded ominous. So the speculation here over the weekend – when in fact the agreement had already been worked out – was that Carter's problem was how to get back down to earth from his mountain top without doing disastrous damage to his new-won popularity.

By the weekend, some of the reporters in the Thurmont vigil were joking about getting buttons made saying, 'free the Camp David Two.' The Camp David Three would have been more appropriate, since Jimmy Carter had almost as much at stake as Sadat and Begin. A Harris poll showed that, since the summit was announced, his popularity rating had ascended from a near-impeachment level of 30 per cent to respectable 42 per cent.

☐ Fifteen years ago Louis Heren wrote a marvellous piece that understandably gave great offence here. He compared Washington to one of the great cities of the Raj, with its trim all-white cantonments northwest of Rock Creek Park, and the teeming slums of the native city beyond.

Washington today is more of an imperial city than ever. In a time when cold economic winds are blowing through the middle west and the north-east, and even parts of California, Washington's civil servants, lawyers and lobbyists bask in inflation-proof prosperity. One law firm here – Covington and Burling, Dean Acheson's old firm – made $7.4 *million* in fees from the bankrupt Penn Central Railroad alone. My own social experiences of the week include having a mandarin meal cooked for me by a bachelor friend's personal Chinese chef; and a dinner party at a lawyer's house where an oriental butler handed round the champagne. The next morning's *Washington Post* ran a long article by one of the guests, about the servant problem. 'Without domestics,' the headline said, 'the system won't work.'

☐ At the same time Washington has acquired the cultural life of a great capital. The latest symbol, after the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the Hirshhorn Sculpture Museum, is the soaringly beautiful new east wing of the National Gallery, donated by the Mellons and designed by I.M.Pei. Nor is this merely a tax deductible renaissance for a few. It rests on a solid pyramid of local writers and painters, and a reliable public for live theatre and music.

The great divide between the cantonments and the native city has not disappeared, but it has been eroded. Many middle class blacks participate in both the city's prosperity and its cultural renaissance. Most significant of all, upper middle class white people are pouring back into the inner city neighbourhoods they once abandoned to poor blacks.

☐ I was intrigued by a full page ad in the *Washington Post*. 'Mr President,' it said in big black type, 'Youngstown is a moral issue. As religious leaders we need your help to keep self-help alive there and in the rest of Ohio.' And there followed the signatures of several hundred bishops, priests, ministers and rabbis, duly joined together in the name of something called 'The Ecumenical Coalition of the Mahoning Valley.' The text of the ad went on to spell out the miseries of economic decay in what used to be the engine room of American industry. Thirty-seven thousand jobs lost in the last ten years in Cleveland, 19,000 in Dayton, 15,000 in Akron, and so on. Youngstown has already lost 5,000 jobs and is in danger of losing another 17,000, directly and indirectly, if the Lykes Corporation, which owns the big steel mill there, and has collected some $600 million in federal subsidies, now shuts down the plant as it would like to.

What a demonstration of the power of religion in Middle America, I thought. In Britain, if a steel mill is in danger of closing, the unions prevent it. In France, the government steps in. And in America, people turn in time of truth to the spiritual power. It turns out that it isn't quite like that. Behind the Ecumenical Alliance is a radical Washington intellectual called Gar Alperowitz, who is perhaps best known for a 'revisionist' history of the origins of the Cold War.

Now he runs something called the National Centre for Economic Alternatives, which is the sort of euphemism socialists have to hide behind in America. Alperowitz was called in, or got himself called in, by local community and religious leaders to see whether the community and the steelworkers together can take over the steel mill. They would need to raise about $470 million, Alperowitz calculates. By last May they had raised about $1.2 million, which suggests why the Mahoning Valley is going to need federal help to help itself. In the meantime the Lykes Corporation, which has already had the the federal help, has paid out huge dividends to preferred stockholders out of net earnings, and let the Youngstown plant run down. In the circumstances, it is a little surprising that you can only attack capitalism in Youngstown surreptitiously by using euphemisms like self-help, ecumenicalism, and 'economic alternatives.'

☐ True life film script. Exterior. Day. Pine woods in North Carolina. A stolen car, abandoned. The boot is crammed with files and papers. They overflow on to the ground around. Enter schoolchildren, who pick up the papers and read them. Zoom in to close shot. What is this? These are top secret intelligence cables between Washington and the US Embassy in Saigon. The children take them to school, and use them for scribbling, until a teacher catches them and calls the FBI.

The car turns out to have been stolen from Graham Martin, former US Ambassador in Rome (where he was mixed up in CIA funding of right-wing groups) and in Saigon.

He became a national hero when, just before the fall, he tore the flag from the embassy roof and took it into the helicopter with him so that it wouldn't fall into the hands of the Commies.

Martin is now in a North Carolina hospital, after lung surgery. He says he meant to give the papers to the LBJ library in Texas. The LBJ library confirms that he signed a deed of gift – *after* the car was stolen.

Why? Martin says he wanted historians to have the documents, which provide a complete disclosure of the inner history of the US in Vietnam from 1963 to 1975. But Frank Snepp, the former CIA man who has written a highly critical book about Martin's behaviour as Ambassador in Saigon, says Martin told him he took the papers 'so he could have the last word on Henry Kissinger'.

Kissinger's memoirs are due to be published soon, and the *Sunday Times* is said to have paid high for them. Perhaps too high, since it is generally assumed in Washington that they will contain a highly one-sided version of the collapse of American Power in South-East Asia. Frank Snepp, meanwhile has been laid under a court order by a judge. Because of the oath he swore when he joined the CIA he is allowed to write nothing about his service in Saigon; without 'the Company's' permission: not even a short story he has written for *Esquire* magazine about an American in Saigon who has an affair with a French girl.

No such inhibitions, apparently, impede Martin, who is still technically an Ambassador, from carting trunkloads of top secret papers around the country. Nor, of course, is it generally assumed that Henry Kissinger's expensive memoirs were written entirely without access to classified documents.

Godfrey Hodgson

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ Weapons left behind by football supporters or taken off them at the Stoke City ground during last season are being used by the police in Stoke for training. – *The Times* (D. G. Hall)

☐ Local estate agents in Wiltshire are describing the village of Great Somerford, where Capt. Mark Phillips's parents live, as being desirable for its 'Royal undertones'. – *Daily Telegraph* (Mrs M. Cawkell)

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

Cream Puffs

My father, and for reasons that can only have been comprehensible to himself (who did not reveal them), to God (doubtless already pretty pre-occupied with the other and more important items on His plate) and to Freud (who would certainly have let out an understanding *Ach ja!* and nodded his old nut off), used to attack motor-cars. Attack them physically, I mean. Not vehicles in busy motion, you understand, and scorching along the Hog's Back at a breathtaking 37 m.p.h., but cars at rest and unoccupied and standing, irresistible targets, within easy reach of the front door of our Berkshire home. Motor-cars in the days of which I speak were by no means the sleek and streamlined roadsters of today. They had detachable lamps, large and bulbous motor-horns, tool-boxes clamped to the running-board, flapping talc side-curtains which combined with the hood to provide draughty protection in inclement weather, and spare tyres nestling in a sort of groove and held firmly in place by substantial leather straps. In cases of really de luxe machines, a speaking-tube looped its way from rear headquarters to the front line and permitted dowagers, cocooned in fur rugs, to give instructions ('Harrods first, Jenner') to their chauffeurs.

My father had discovered that some of these extraneous embellishments would, if given a vigorous enough push, become detached from their moorings and then fall, with a pleasing clatter, on to the gravel of our drive. Tool-boxes sometimes split open and scattered spanners about. Heaven! More fools the owners for not screwing them on firmly enough. Only themselves to blame! But if the various aids to travel all held firm, he would then, to make up for the disappointment, kick the car's tyres and wheels for ten minutes or so. One never knew, a puncture might develop.

Another anti-car pastime, when cranking a handle was mercifully abandoned and electric starters came in, was to climb on board, fail to switch on the engine, and run the battery down. He clearly found the steadily decreasing whirring sound, and the last few mournful chugs, soothing in some way. Friends arriving for tea had to be warned of this little risk (I can think of worse ones) and advised to leave their cars elsewhere than near the house, preferably camouflaged with branches of trees, and pretend that they had arrived on foot. This gave my father an opportunity of explaining to them that they had missed several valuable short-cuts. But at least their cars were undamaged. It was perhaps these little domestic embarrassments, for such indeed they were though I can now recollect them without rancour as in other ways he was a kind man, that have possibly made me on the whole a shade too chatty and over-effusive (a politer adjective than gushing) in my social life and always ready, at the merest hint in a guest of unhappiness or a sad silence or an awkwardness or the faintest trace of worry on a face, to rush head-long in with comforting (I hope) host noises and cries of 'Do I see somebody who can manage another macaroon?'

But when it comes to public effusiveness, I see that in this, as in so much else, I am the merest second-rater, as I shall later explain. And to add to this shortcoming, in any material matters requiring one to be observant, I am positively zero-rated. Almost anything passes me by and thus it is that I have totally missed, until yesterday, a pleasing newspaper heading that may for all I know, have been appearing daily for years. It occurs on one of those back pages of *The Times* that come before the crossword. Speaking of which, as I gather that these delightful puzzles are largely composed by ex-schoolmasters such as myself, I rather wonder whether their editorial staff might not like to take me on. The only small drawback here is that whenever, in an idle moment, I compose a crossword clue, it is invariably indecent. Perhaps you may care for a few examples of my art (I give the answers becomingly shielded by a bracket which may be skipped by the sensitive). Now then; 'Stop, the little devil's found relief': 6 letters (Impede). 'Hark! Here comes the Navy!': 6 (Seamen). 'Mad military exercises for Baby?': 5-5 (Potty-drill). No good, you think? Oh well.

But it is neither with crosswords nor indecencies that I am here concerned but with that back page of *The Times* that bears at its top, and in extremely fancy print, the words LA CREME DE LA CREME. This means, as all must know, 'the very best' and was, in my young days and at the time when my father was merrily dislodging acetylene lamps and finding their glass beautifully breakable, a descriptive phrase for a certain social class and reserved for those very cocooned dowagers of whom I wrote and their upper-crust relations. But no more, it seems. The page contains a series of advertisements for secretaries, though whether it is the secretaries who are *la crème de la crème* or the creaminess is claimed by that capable Mr Bagshawe in Personnel, who can say? I am glad to say that the repellent little name, 'Girl Friday', seems to have disappeared. Plainly too servile by far and surely implying, for those familiar with the Crusoe story, that only dusky visitors to our shores need apply for the post, which seems tough luck on the inhabitants.

And it is here that the effusiveness comes in. Employers wildly overplay their hands. They gush, they gabble, they beseech, they woo. One Senior Director describes himself, I note, as 'sometimes exasperating, often demanding, but always delightful.' Another is 'fascinating, young, zany'. And after the challenging suggestion that their boss will be a bit of a handful and the generally jocular approach and the luncheon vouchers and the enticing 'come and be one of our team', there is the actual work (rather sketchily outlined and referred to in vague terms as 'areas of involvement'), the hint that there is plenty of scope for initiative (why not give a speedy demonstration of your resourcefulness and, while they're all out at lunch, have a sauna installed in the boardroom?), and a promise of 'lots of client contact', whatever that may mean. And if you have languages, it is very easy to get the impression that you will be spending your entire time telephoning excitingly to France ('*Allô, allô, ici* Miss Westinghouse'), to Germany ('*Hier* Westinghouse'), to Rome ('*Mi chiamo* Westinghouse') and to The Hague ('*Ik ben Juffrouw* Westinghouse'), and for the rest of the day you'll just loll back buffing your nails in your idyllic seventh floor office heaven among the glossy rubber plants. Many of the prospective employers, clutching at straws, describe their scene of operations as 'supremely attractive offices'. There's no such place.

Roger Woddis

Persian Blind

'This poisonous vendetta against the Shah.' – Headline to an article by Lord Chalfont in *The Times*, 18 September.

Awake! – for Chalfont from a lordly Height
Has praised the Peacock Throne (as well
he might):
And Lo! the Terror of the Left has seen
A Heap of Corpses in a holy Light.

Corruption grows apace but the divine
High-minded Páhlaví pursues his Line:
'Reform!' – the Shah cries to the
hungry Crowd,
And offers them a leaking Flask of Wine.

Come, fill the Cemetery at Besht Azár
With Demonstrators who have gone too far;
For they are Bayers to the crescent Moon
And secret Readers of the Morning Star.

'How sweet our Sovereign Dynasty!' –
think some:
Others – 'How slow the Land Reform
to come!'
Ah, take the Oil at hand and bank the Cash;
Oh, the fat Profit in a single Drum!

Now Callaghan observes the State of Play,
And Democrats are forced to look away,
While the glad Hand of Moses pats
the Shah,
To his Delight, and Frank Allaun's Dismay.

Lo! some we love, and others we detest –
For Chalfont there is but a simple Test;
Befriend the Butcher and forget the Blood,
As long as he is chummy with the West.

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Letters to the Editor

Poor taste

Sir, As a Christian, a Socialist and a motor racing enthusiast I found the cartoon on page 319 of last week's issue of the NS in very poor taste and an unnecessary inclusion. Allowing for the particularly tragic circumstances surrounding the death of Ronnie Peterson, the timing and supposedly satirical comment appeared grossly ill-judged. Even the draughtsmanship was crude and largely illegible.

I trust your artist may find a more suitable occasion on which to take up his point against the all-embracing capitalist sponsorship and control of sport and other pursuits, if that was the intended task. I wonder how many other readers thought this particular submission as offensive. Please keep to the political and social ambiguities in life and leave private individuals and their grief in time of death out of your crusading activities.

STUART R. ASTON

7 Tanglewood Close,
Croydon

Dissolute ways

Sir, Francis Wheen (NS 15 September) need not go as far as Canada to find a Prime Minister who can dissolve Parliament before its term is over. In Ireland the Prime Minister is free to call an election any time he chooses during his government's five-year term of office. This omission is all the more glaring in the light of Mr Wheen's listing of most of the other Western European democracies. It seems that the idea of Ireland's separate identity remains a difficult one for the British mind to assimilate – even after 56 years.

DERMOT M. BOWLER

33 Kingswood Avenue
London NW6

Japan and World War III

Sir, Masamichi Inoki's letter (NS 15 September) is an example of the kind of unconvincing rhetoric which has already been discredited in Japan. First, Mr Inoki says that the sophisticated revision added to Article 9 in the Constitutional Law of Japan allowed the Japanese people to build the Self Defence Forces after independence. But this opinion is at variance with the historical facts, and even the Japanese government has never officially adopted this theory, which does not succeed in justifying the proposition that the SDF are not the 'land, sea and air forces as well as other war potential' outlawed by Article 9. Indeed the theory is contrary to the interpretation given by Prime Minister Yoshida and Mr Ashida, chairman of the Constitutional Law Revision Committee, to the effect that the additions to Article 9 do not change the gist of the Article.

Secondly, it is a well-known fact that, as Murray Sayle pointed out, 'Sensha' (a tank) has been called 'Tokusha' (special purpose vehicle) in Japanese official language ever since the National Police Reserve was formed. This terminological ambiguity would seem to indicate some awareness on the part of the authorities that to call a tank a tank would be contrary to the plain meaning and intention of Article 9. Mr Inoki may indulge in more candour in the National Defence Academy, but this is hardly to the point.

Thirdly, Mr Inoki insists that the Peace and National Security Research Institute is far from being a lobbying organisation openly devoted to pushing up the defence budget. However, he does not explain the true significance of the Institute. According to the common understanding of Japanese intellectuals this Institute is intended to be a link in the chain of long-range strategy. The government, the ruling party and financial circles have been supporting the strategy in order to increase defence power rapidly now that public opinion accepts Self Defence Forces *de facto*, if not *de jure*. The Institute aims at making policy proposals and thus, albeit in an indirect way, exerts pressure in favour of military expansion.

KENJI URATA

Professor of Constitutional Law
Waseda University
Tokyo

Critic on the Clapham omnibus

Sir, Although I have long become immune to the pathetic state of film criticism in this country, I cannot leave the contribution of your 'guest' critic Richard Boston (NS 15 September) unchallenged. How on earth can you employ anyone who by his own admission has seen two films in two years (*Annie Hall* and *The Return of the Pink Panther*), reads the reviews of other critics before actually seeing the film for himself and cannot pay attention for more than 70 minutes? He is, of course, perfectly entitled to his views on the films he saw, but his criticism is perhaps more of the standard one overhears in bus queues than what one expects to find in the pages of a journal which devotes a large amount of space to a supposedly serious interest in the Arts in this country.

PETER HOWDEN

Electric Cinema Club
191 Portobello Road
London W11

Victims of thalidomide

Sir, John Pilger is wriggling (Letters 15 September). Let us be clear about his real demands. He is insisting that a company should pay full compensation to disabled children whom an independent medical panel said were not damaged by their product. After an impartial investigation a former Ombudsman said that this was true beyond all 'reasonable doubt'. Yet Pilger not only demands payment; he abuses those who disagree with him, including Alf Morris, MP, Sir Alan Marre and myself.

No one attacked Distillers more violently than I did when they were refusing proper compensation for children actually damaged by thalidomide. But each issue must be judged on its merits and it is unjust to use the firm's past bad record to force it to pay compensation to children not damaged by its product. If Pilger checks the record of the original thalidomide campaign he will find that the journalists involved were extremely tough but scrupulously fair. That was the basic strength of the whole campaign. It appears that Pilger is attempting to exploit that work. He evades the basic question of whether all 'Y' List children were damaged by thalidomide, ignores the medical panel and former Ombudsman and, hey presto, calls them 'thalidomide families'.

Pilger argues that Distillers should compensate all 'Y' List children irrespective of whether they were damaged by thalidomide or not. If they did so, why should they not also be responsible for all disabled children born during the thalidomide years? Pilger does not answer this point. Instead, he says that *he* made no demands on behalf of other children and therefore the argument is dishonest! That is an egocentric and eccentric interpretation.

Pilger claims that it is 'untrue' that Sir Alan Marre's criterion was based on my proposal. In fact, on page 24 of his report, Sir Alan says: 'But approaching the matter generally within what I believe to be the spirit of Mr Ashley's suggestion . . .' and then makes his recommendations. Sir Alan Marre makes several criticisms of the way in which the 'X' and 'Y' lists were drawn up and how 'Y' List claims were handled. I agree with his comments but Pilger misleads your readers by implying that the families concerned were damaged by surrendering their right to sue for negligence. Distillers paid compensation to children because they were damaged by thalidomide, not because they proved negligence. The children need only the right to prove in a court that they are thalidomide damaged and then they get full compensation. That is a right they still have and anyone seeking an honourable settlement should not try to disguise this fact.

So far as I am concerned, reasonable justice has been done in the thalidomide affair. My primary concern now, and that of my Parliamentary colleagues, is to try and prevent future drug disasters and ensure that the present inadequate monitoring system is improved.

JACK ASHLEY

House of Commons
London SW1

Doing their best

Sir, I read Christopher Price's comments about libraries (NS 8 September) with interest. I can assure him that librarians are well aware of the bibliographic needs of prisoners, hospital patients, housebound readers and blacks. Many local authorities have provided services to prisoners and hospital patients, especially in psychiatric hospitals, for a considerable period of time.

More recently services have been provided for Asian readers with Asian language books while the library service has been extended to housebound readers and old people's hostels. Librarians would welcome a further extension of the service provided that sufficient funds were made available so that it could be adequately staffed. In view of the current employment situation for recently qualified librarians there would be no shortage of applicants either.

ANDREW HUDSON

39 Ashmant Drive
Rochdale

Sur le continent

Sir, Christopher Price unwisely asserts (NS 15 September) that *chez* 'our continental neighbours' schoolchildren study hard without examinations as a spur. In German schools at least (so often used for comparison in these matters) the opposite is true, as I can testify.

Pupils are mercilessly drilled and tested *at least once a month in each subject*. The be-all and end-all of their school life thus becomes the grubbing for marks, carried to extreme lengths, such as begging the teacher to allow just half a mark more, or even frequently going to the headmaster to get the half mark allowed – so as to convert a 'fair' into a 'good'. Every week there is a constant stream of parents attending each teacher's 'surgery' shamelessly pleading their child's cause.

The evils resulting from such a rigid system are a chapter in themselves – not least being the total absence of the friendly teacher-taught relationship of encouragement that Mr Price so rightly advocates. (For instance, it is

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unheard of for parents and teachers to have close social relations, even in a small community, in case this should be interpreted as trying to influence the teacher to give good marks!)

Thus in a situation where a decimal place may decide if a child has to re-sit the whole year's work (a demoralising process that occurs every year in every class), or even be relegated to a 'secondary modern' school, German children have to contend with a rat-race effectively from the age of six (not sixteen plus). Each little test in, say French verbs, throughout their school career may partially determine their future job prospects.

HOWARD CORBISHLEY
30 Radstock Avenue
Kenton
Harrow, Middlesex

Sir, Perhaps it was fear of a karate rather than a logic chop from his M6 hitch-hiking pickup that prevented Christopher Price (London Diary 8 September) from giving the brushoff to a French *lycée* teacher in such evident need of brushing up his French grammar. The Labour Party is, and remains, in its chauvinist, masculine fashion, *le parti travailliste*, not *la partie*.

ALASTAIR FORBES
1837 Chateau d'Oex
Switzerland

Christopher Price writes: I am sure my karate expert got it right; the fault was mine. The clatter of my disintegrating Leyland Marina on a somewhat similar M6 must have drowned the Labour Party's true gender – which, I quite agree, will be only too evident in the male sea of phallocrat faces at Blackpool next week.

John P. Mackintosh

Sir, Over the last twelve years, John Pitcairn Mackintosh, professor, politician and humanitarian, gave his heart and soul to his constituency and to the country. We think it would be appropriate to erect a permanent memorial as an expression of our esteem. If anyone would like to contribute could they please send donations, large or small, to The John P. Mackintosh Memorial Fund, c/o Mr Charles Hunter, Manager, Royal Bank of Scotland, East Linton, East Lothian.

ARTHUR L. GREENAN
14 Bank Road
East Linton
East Lothian

Jolly good value

Sir, Francis Wheen's article on public schools (NS 8 September) suggests that he, as an Old Harrovian, may have received some of the 'benefits' that he ascribes to public school education generally – 'a bullying self-confidence' and a 'blindness to the existence of anything worthwhile'.

The parents of 500,000 pupils at independent schools in Britain today and a further 100,000 who get in touch with ISIS (Independent Schools Information Service) each year are not so blind. They quite clearly do not like what they see they can get for free in the maintained sector, otherwise they would use it. They do want the best for their child and whether or not the child goes on to higher education they know that his or her chances of doing so from an independent school are about 50/50, as opposed to 1 in 13 nationally.

They are unlikely to find that independent schools are 'coy' about their academic results since although they educate just 5 per cent of the nation's school children, they are educating 25 per cent of the nation's school sixth formers that pass one or more A-Levels.

These tangible benefits, added to other intangible ones of excellent choral, musical, artistic, religious, courteous and pastoral traditions that independent schools provide are not subsidised by the Labour government at the tax-payers' and rate-payers' expense as Mr Wheen suggests. The figure of £136m annual subsidy which has been mentioned as the cost to the nation of free places taken up by central and local government is itself grossly inflated but is more than covered by the £150m the schools save the country each year in teacher salaries alone.

Perhaps the saddest part of Mr Wheen's article is its beginning. He is, after all, entitled to his own half-baked views and is lucky enough to have a platform from which to express them. He does not have to express the views of the NEW STATESMAN proprietorial board. Why then does he cast a slur on *In Britain* – the magazine of the Labour Government's financed British Tourist Authority – for publishing an article praising Harrow?

TIM DEVLIN
Director
Independent Schools Information Service
26 Caxton Street
London SW1

Belittled Women

Sir, Michael Mason's scathing review of *Women and Children First* (NS 8 September) contains many inaccuracies and misrepresentations; indeed, the 'measure of nasty method' which he attributes to us in writing the book is far more applicable to his manner of reviewing it. By omission, and by shifting the emphasis of many of our comments taken grossly out of context, he has foisted on us views which we neither hold nor express. One instance of the way in which Mr Mason has misrepresented us is his implication that we wrote dismissively about the *Magnet* of the first world war. Actually we commended this for the tolerance and excellence of Frank Richards's wartime stories.

Michael Mason also suggests that we have made a conscious 'effort to discredit' all the fiction of war that was produced before the 1940s. In fact we have written favourably about early authors as varied in style and approach as Enid Bagnold, Vera Brittain, Rebecca West, Pamela Hinkson, Stevie Smith, Frank Richards, Edwy Searles Brooks, H. G. Wells, D. H. Lawrence and Phillip Gibbs, to name only a few. In *Women and Children First* our intention of course was not simply to suggest whether books were 'good' or 'bad' but to indicate their reflection of society's attitudes to women and children in the context of both the major wars. We feel that we have done this honestly, both in looking at books which are sympathetic with the military ethic and at those which express pacifist views. We hope that your readers will decide whether or not we have been successful from reading our book rather than Michael Mason's review.

PATRICIA CRAIG
MARY CADOGAN
46 Overbury Avenue
Beckenham
Kent

Correction

There were two printing errors in Jeremy Paxman's article about Provisional Sinn Fein last week: raids upon the organisation this year have continued most (rather than not) particularly in Belfast, and Mr Adams talked of war zones (rather than cones).

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AUTUMN BOOKS

Richard Cobb

They Seek Him Here, They Seek Him There

Danton by NORMAN HAMPSON *Duckworth* £9.80

Norman Hampson is one of the most experienced, most lucid, and certainly the fairest of current historians of the French Revolution. He is wise, patient, very perceptive, he has no ideological axe to grind, and he writes extremely well, wasting no words, and every now and then delighting readers with his dry sense of humour. All his work has been based on careful, often minute research into the archival evidence available; and he has a natural talent for debate. His *Robespierre* was a *tour de force* of historical discussion and interpretation. But then the Incorruptible is as much a perpetual debate as a dead revolutionary. With Danton, the biographer is up against much greater problems, some of them insuperable, and the author knows it.

What is *public* about Danton is the fact that he possesses two statues, one in Paris, another in his birthplace, Arcis-sur-Aube. At one time he also had a *centrale* (my own number in Paris for many years was DAN. 71,48, a cluster of revolutions). But the public figure is extremely deceptive; and Danton, throughout his revolutionary career, was a man who preferred to operate in the shadows. Of his pre-revolutionary career, the first 30 years of his life, very little is known indeed: the case with most of the revolutionary leaders. What *is* known is much to his credit: a likeable family man with a talent for friendship, a pleasure-lover, with an excellent appetite in every sense. By 1787, materially he was much better set up than most of his future colleagues, having already acquired a power base and a clientèle of protégés in Paris. As an *avocat aux Conseils du Roi,* an office purchased in 1787, predictably he emerges as a *ministériel* and as an enemy of the Parlements.

But, as the author complains, the public man is so elusive as to offer formidable problems to the historian. 'Danton preferred meeting people to putting things on paper, which does not make things easier for his biographers.' Nor have Professor Hampson's predecessors been particularly helpful. Carlyle refers to him as 'a real man'; Michelet states that he was 'firstly and above everything else a male'; Louis Blanc praises his 'masculine simplicity'. This does not get us very far, though the author observes, in a perceptive aside, that no judgment could have been more pleasing to Danton himself. While awaiting execution, he is supposed to have said: 'If I left my balls to Robespierre and my legs to Couthon [a paralytic] the Committee of Public Safety could last a little longer.' There is no doubt about his appetite for women. Comte regards him as a pre-positivist, Aulard as a predecessor of the *Parti Radical,* Mathiez as an enemy agent and as a politician up for sale. His latest biographer clearly likes him – and he is indeed likeable, because he was a man who thought friendship should come before *raison-d'état* and, as Professor Hampson writes: 'he expressed himself in everyday language and was not forever adjusting an imaginary toga' (*that* for Robespierre or the horrible Saint-Just); 'he liked to be liked and he saw people as people and not as principles on two legs' (and *that* too for the saintly pair); concluding: 'he did not regard the Revolution as some kind of moral regeneration of France and humanity at large.' And, in the course of the book, we are left in little doubt that he *did* regard the Revolution as a means of making himself more comfortable, as a source of enrichment in land, and as a fount of patronage with which to keep his many friends happy.

However, this does not get us very far. Of all the revolutionary leaders, Danton is the most ambiguous, often eluding even the most simple narrative. Almost the only facts about which there is no doubt are the dates of his birth and death (the latter, part of public history), of his two marriages, of the births of his two sons, of the purchase of his *office*, and of his appointments and elections. Virtually everything else is blurred, and often, one suspects, deliberately blurred. Even his movements are curiously hard to trace, and there are gaps – sometimes of several days – in the course of which we, in common with his contemporaries, lose track of him altogether. Like Robespierre, he tended to go to ground each time a *journée* was impending, and there is scarcely a historical date of the French Revolution on which it is possible to be quite sure of his whereabouts. He may or may not have gone to England, either in July or in October-November 1789, though it seems likely that he was there some time that winter. He may have been in the Palais-Royal on 12 July; and he was certainly at the Bastille – or what was left of it – on 16 July. We know that he got out of Paris, with Desmoulins and Fréron, on 17 July 1791. Louis-Philippe was to write that, as duc de Chartres, he met him in November 1792; but we do not know where he was on 10 August or what he did then, though he went then to Arcis just before that date. It is all hard work for the biographer, frequently reduced to such despairing comments as: '. . . there is no means of knowing how hard Danton worked', 'with Danton all things are possible', 'it is impossible to know whether he made any serious effort to save Louis XVI' and so on.

Then there are his public utterances. But these too, as Professor Hampson remarks, were often 'masterpieces of ambiguity', a lot of fancy wrapping with very little inside, or a lot of fire and fury enveloping a discreetly packeted interior of moderation. In this respect he had a lot in common with Robespierre, with the difference that Robespierre put even his ambiguity down on paper, as if he could trust nothing to memory. They were both good at waiting on events; but Robespierre, a diligent second-rater, would never trust anything to improvisation: it had all to be written down in advance, as between the set limits of a child's old-fashioned dictation book, even the height of the letters set between lines. This was why he needed absolute silence to obtain the full effects. But Danton was quite different; he thrived on heckling, and, given an open tribune, could completely turn the feeling of a meeting. Time and again he managed to shout his way out of some very awkward situation. Given Robespierre's opportunity on 9 Thermidor, Danton would have won the day, for he could shout down a whole assembly.

But the contrasts between the two leading figures of the Revolution are as important as their common deviousness and prudence. Danton only had to look in a mirror to believe he was indestructible. Robespierre, on the other hand, was always going on about his destructibility – it was part of his self-importance. Danton was not self-important. Nor was he diligent; he was lazy, and he was only a politician *par éclipses.* Family, friends and private pleasures came first. Danton was a family man; for Robespierre, his brother and his sadly defective sister were little more than props to his egotism (Robespierre was the Patrick Pearse of the French revolution). Danton was not keen on Virtue, and he was certainly very corrupt.

The author is extremely interesting on the setting-up of Danton's patronage system on the power-base of the Cordeliers District. In 1789, Billaud-Varenne and Paré were actually employed by him; Desmoulins, Robert, Manuel, Fréron, and the future *hébertistes* were his protégés. In fact there was a *clan Danton*, a political machine ready-formed and in operation by July 1789. Despite the extent of his patronage, as Professor Hampson shows, Danton was quite remarkably unsuccessful in his attempts to gain even a moderate position of power. People were reluctant to vote for him; and it was only in November 1791 that he managed to get elected to *something,* and that not very much.

The summer of 1792 was his time of triumph. As Minister of Justice, he was at last in a position to reward his protégés. But, in the autumn and in the spring of the following year, he became dangerously involved in the disasters in Belgium, though there is little doubt that he put these to good private use. As the author points out, the events of the summer of 1793 were disastrous to all his policies; by July he had already become something of a back number, though he played a decisive part in the *journée* of 4-5 September. No doubt his greatest mistake, at this period, was twice to have refused office in the Committee of Public Safety. Danton was a parliamentarian as well as a man who was at his best *en coulisses,* and as the faction fights worsened, he found himself deprived of more and more options and forced into having less and less open choices. Probably his greatest mistake at this stage was to have believed that

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it was possible for a revolutionary to retire, to opt out. He seems to have believed that, as long as he gave public support to Robespierre, he would be allowed to remain as a revolutionary elder statesman, above it all. He did actually retire for about six weeks, but seems to have been forced back to Paris in order to defend those of his friends who were dangerously compromised in the enveloping scandal of the East India Company liquidation. Even then he could probably have survived, had he been prepared to drop Fabre d'Eglantine.

It is difficult to associate Danton with any coherent policy; as Professor Hampson observes, at one time or another he had been associated with widely contrary ones: a man of moderation, and yet a terrorist who accepted full responsibility for the September Massacres; an advocate of universal war, blowing on *la trompette guerrière*, organising Belgium both for pillage and annexation, yet seeking an arrangement with England or Prussia or both, even supporting Dumouriez, *en sous main*, with his schemes for an independent Kingdom of Belgium, while helping himself to a cartload or so of furniture and jewelry when the French were being driven out; a parliamentarian who could always sway an assembly, but who preferred the quiet of a rural retreat; a man prepared to accommodate a monarchy, even a change of dynasty, yet a tepid republican. Publicly he often talked and shouted terror; but privately he tried to intervene in favour of his friends and he was surprisingly magnanimous towards his defeated opponents. He certainly had no time for principles, concepts, forms of government; and he was quick to adjust to changing circumstances.

Probably his main concern was to make the Revolution safe for people like himself, to stop it in its impetuous course, and to stabilise it. He was a parliamentary politician with his feet firmly on the ground and a convinced 'possibilist' by instinct (it is easy to understand why Jaurès came to admire him). He may have conducted his own private foreign policy, while outside the government and without informing its members of what he was up to, sending secret emissaries to sound out London (certainly one of them was arrested in Brest on his way back) – a dangerous game at any time, and not far off treason in time of war. It would without doubt be in keeping with his predilection for secret rendezvous. But there is little evidence that, between November 1793 and March 1794, he actually encouraged Bourdon, Phillippeaux, Thuriot, Desmoulins and the other 'Indulgents' in their campaign against the Revolutionary Government.

It is much more likely that, to the very last, he was trying to keep in with Robespierre, whom he regarded as the best hope for a middle-of-the-way solution to the problem of power. He loathed Vadier, was detested by Billaud-Varenne (whom he had befriended and employed) and was not prepared to sacrifice his friend Fabre. In economic policies, he seems to have gone along with whatever was the Government line at the time. He found it quite easy to change his mind and he enjoyed pursuing several policies at once. The author has taken a long cool look at his accounts, and is convinced of his corruption. He believes that he was quite willing to accept bribes from all and sundry, but that he was never bought. The remarkable thing is that he never had much to sell and that he was never as important as he made out or as others thought he was. Ultimately then, the question of his corruption is peripheral. But, as the author states, throughout his revolutionary career, there hung about him the whiff of scandal; and, in 1790 and 1791, this may have accounted for the reluctance of people to vote for him.

Danton was a politician in the back-slapping sense. There was at all times a *réseau Danton*; and he was extremely loyal to his friends and generous with his protégés. So any study of Danton is going to include a horde of underlings, undercover men, dinner companions, go-betweens, accomplices, emissaries, speculators and double-agents. The author manages with great success to guide us through the intricacies of what must have been one of the most extensive and confusing political machines of the revolutionary period and throughout his well-organised book he keeps in play an extensive cast without ever confusing the reader under the flood of names. His exploration of the friendship-cum-patronage network is one of the most original and important features of the study. He is well aware that, with Danton, nothing is ever simple or quite what it seems and that people of vastly differing allegiances might at one time or another be described as *dantonistes*. He would be chary too of labelling Danton himself as a *dantoniste*. Danton liked people and company, and he was not overscrupulous about what company he kept. He was far more interested in people than in ideas, though one of the surprises of this fine book is the indication of how well read he was, especially in English; a pleasing surprise, for this amiable and rumbustious rascal would have done credit to English political pragmatism. Perhaps he really WAS an English agent! He deserved to be

Professor Hampson is visibly happier with Danton than with Robespierre (a man whom he had to entrust to a team of debaters); and this is hardly surprising, for Danton, warts, pock-marks and all, is a man – and not a MAN – of human proportions, immense appetites and a crude turn of phrase (he calls it 'the delicacy of the sentiment'): *je montrerai mon cul aux passants* – no wonder he upset Mme Roland! As he says, 'there was little of the Jane Austen hero about him'. He has brought much light into very dark places, and he keeps an open mind and is much aware of the value of doubt. Danton is a challenge to anybody; but it is one he has pulled off with flying colours, in a beautifully constructed, delightfully written study of this elusive, generous, bearlike, and, when all is said and done, eminently sensible fellow. It could not be bettered.

Denis Donoghue

Ghostly Paradigms

The Irish Renaissance: An Introduction to Anglo-Irish Literature by RICHARD FALLIS
Gill & Macmillan £3.60

So much depends upon the metaphors we use. As soon as you refer to 'the Irish Renaissance' you move into a form of discourse which features a paradigm of cyclical reincarnation or, more dramatically, a single 'moment' in which the spirit of Ireland, imprisoned for centuries, threw aside its chains and declared itself free. If the cycle is dominant, you choose the Phoenix as its symbol, meaning that the true spirit consumes itself, dies in its own excess, and is reborn from those ashes. The corresponding version of Irish history is easy to recite. Richard Fallis's book, for instance, is divided into three parts, 'Phoenix Resurgent', 'Phoenix Triumphant' and 'Phoenix Imperilled'. The bird sustains the myth, the adjectives specify its political phases; struggle, triumph, and in Phase Three intimations of decay and self-destruction.

Fleshed out a little, it means that for several centuries the spirit of Ireland was suppressed by English domination; that between 1880 and 1940 the spirit stirred into true life, a life declared in terms of politics, literature, revival of the Irish language, Gaelic sport, and the open Rebellion of Easter Week 1916; that decay and self-destruction began with the Civil War and continued in the establishment of the Free State on narrow, Roman Catholic terms, issuing in the boring, petit-bourgeois state we are supposed to have today. Thirty years ago, the Irish Christian Brothers taught a modified version of this cycle in the guise of Irish History: the cycle was featured as essentially revolutionary. It was emphasised that in virtually every generation in modern times Ireland rebelled against England: each rebellion failed, until 1916 when Providence inspired the true action, the blood-sacrifice of Pearse, MacDonagh, and the rest, and Ireland at last became a nation. The consequences in the Civil War and later events were not emphasised. Since 1968, predictably, there has been a decline in the teaching of Irish History in these terms, and far more emphasis on social history The teaching of History has been secularised in the schools by concentrating upon certain eras in World History which have little or no local implication.

There are three readily available metaphors: cycle, flower and theatre. Cycle represents the indomitability of the Irish, their refusal to accept English domination, the generative spirit of a nation. Flower represents the beauty and frailty of the Irish spirit, its truth to nature, its perfection while its triumph lasts. Empson's analysis of Gray's 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard' in *Some Versions of Pastoral* brings out most of the implications of the flower and its sweetness: suitably modified, it would identify Ireland with Nature, and England with Society, factories, machines, and so on. The spirit of Ireland does not prostitute itself; it accepts that its visible life will be short and beautiful since these are the qualities of natural things in an age hostile to nature. Most of the distinctions between Ireland and England are based upon this figure: Irish culture as oral, maternal, entrusted to speech, memory, lore,

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tradition, while English culture is, as Yeats affirmed, the product of the printing press, a function of machines, factories, distinctions of class, the lending library. And so forth. If you wanted to show the history of Ireland as another version of pastoral, you would need flowers to feature its sudden flourishing (flowering) at the end of the 19th century and the same flowers would be strewn upon its coffin.

I need not pursue the metaphor: it's simple enough. As for theatre, it's the most popular metaphor of them all. Henri Focillon says somewhere that there is a vocation of form corresponding to every vocation of substance. The vocation of form which corresponds, in popular lore, to the true substance of Irish history is tragedy: tragic drama, in three acts. The time: 1880-1940, of course. The place: mostly Dublin. Yeats's poem 'Easter, 1916' is the clearest programme-note to this play. In this mythology Easter Week is the climax of the heroic tragedy, the indelible act. O'Casey's plays caused offence because they shifted the emphasis toward the Civil War and left 1916 standing pathetically as a prostituted vision. Yeats is crucial in the metaphor of theatre as applied to Irish history; partly because tragedy was the only form of drama he could take seriously in the sense of exulting in its emotions, especially the emotion of tragic gaiety, the joy with which the tragic hero looked into the face of death. Yeats is the tragic hero, Joyce the sceptic. Yeats articulated the grand passions which made heroic Ireland possible, Joyce showed what happened when the vision was domesticated, forced to rub along with the petty desires which keep daily life going.

We are dealing with the metaphors regularly drawn into the service of a myth. In *The Sense of an Ending* Frank Kermode acted upon a distinction of Alfred Stein's between *fiction and myth: fiction is consciously fictive*, so we do not mistake it for anything else such as reality: myth is congealed fiction, therefore opaque, *reified to the point at which it can* indeed be mistaken for reality. A novel is a fiction, but anti-Semitism is a myth. So people think their fictions, but act out anti-Semitism without thinking. This is the sinister side of every myth: it not only offers to explain the past, it prescribes the form of the future. This is where myth and ideology merge; each is a force of society masquerading as a force of nature and claiming for itself the unanswerable prestige of that source. The case of Ireland is obviously relevant here. One of the reasons why political thinking is especially difficult in Ireland is not (or not chiefly) that there is hatred between some few Catholics and some few Protestants (and *vice versa*, God knows): it is that thinking is stifled by myth, by the feeling that it is already too late for thought – Nature has thought it all out already. Nature's plans for Ireland are deemed to be already inscribed, so there is no point in trying to change them: ghostly paradigms get in the way of every effort to think things out from scratch. We can only play our fated roles, learn the lines written for us.

I have been making a fuss about this not to postpone reviewing Richard Fallis's book but to suggest why I'm sour about his whole enterprise. I believe that the appropriate attitude to adopt to 'the Irish Renaissance' is scepticism; at least to begin with, you should take the line that such a thing may or may not have happened. It may be a misleading myth, an ideology perpetuating itself in the seemingly innocent form of an optional course in American colleges. As far as possible, you should read the poems, plays, and novels first without assuming that in addition to being themselves they are something other and greater, constituents of an Irish Renaissance.

It makes a difference. If you read *The Tower* as a collection of poems, that's one thing: if you read it as partial embodiment of the Irish Renaissance, you have already handed yourself over to the *zeitgeist* or what you have been told the *zeitgeist* is. You are no longer your own man but a subscriber to something you have not thought or experienced. If you are a scholar, your scholarship takes on a rhetorical character you have not earned. Richard Fallis started out innocently enough by liking Yeats's poems but he ends up writing a book which sneers at Ernest Blythe, suggests that Ireland's neutrality in the War was an error and probably a disgrace, and reports that recent poetry emanating from Northern Ireland constitutes 'a new Irish Renaissance'. How would he know? He doesn't know; but 'The Irish Renaissance' is an option in hundreds of American college courses and the students, blithely ignorant of all things Irish, need an easy, informal manual which tells them all they ever wanted to know and hadn't occasion to find out for themselves; that Ireland is about the size of Indiana, that its linguistic history is complicated by the fact that it has (or has had) two languages, Irish and English, and that Seamus Heaney is rather like an Irish Robert Frost. I have no acute objection to any of these statements, except that they are all made within a set of assumptions which Mr Fallis gives not the slightest sign of having questioned. He has taken for granted every easy, unearned assumption encapsulated in the phrase 'the Irish Renaissance', and he has endorsed the *flagrant reification which constitutes its myth.*

To be fair: if Mr Fallis had studied the literary works with a mind as nearly open as possible and with presuppositions as loose and flexible as possible, he might still have come to the conclusion that certain events in the years 1880-1940 had indeed a character in addition to being themselves. He might have decided that 'the Irish Renaissance' is a fact as well attested as the Battle of the Boyne. But that would have been his own decision, and a reader would have treated it as such, giving it whatever credence the produced evidence warranted. Mr Fallis hasn't done this, he has been content with a naïve relation to the myth, ideology – call it what you like.

That much said, is the resultant book useful, helpful to American undergraduates, decently written, pretty accurate, full of basic facts and opinions about hundreds of writers major, minor, and minimal? Yes, indeed. Most of the facts are recited from secondary sources; Mr Fallis doesn't claim to know Irish or to have read any Gaelic literature except in English translation. He takes his account of modern Irish history from F. S. L. Lyons and other authoritative scholars. He has read for himself the literature written in English and he has offered opinions on it. The opinions are mostly all right, though the word 'great' is tossed around pretty loosely. If you call *Borstal Boy* and *The Weaver's Grave* great, what will you do when you have to teach a course on *King Lear*?

When he goes wrong, it's because his opinion is based [illegible] impression. He rebukes the Abbey Theatre for putting on revivals of Boucicault rather than new plays by Irish writers. This is silly. I happen to know that the Abbey directors have been begging Irish writers to send in new plays. The truth is that most of the new Irish plays produced at the Abbey within the past 30 to 40 years were accepted primarily because they were Irish and new, rather than because they were meritorious. If the Abbey stands rightly accused, it is for putting on new Irish plays which, judged by any stringent international standards, are not worth a production. The charter of the Abbey requires the theatre to produce (1) new Irish plays, (2) plays of the English theatre written not later than the 18th century, (3) plays which are considered, like Boucicault, of Irish historical interest, and (4) translations of modern European masterpieces, such as Lorca, Chekhov, and so forth. Of these categories, the Abbey has always regarded (1) as the essential thing; hence the multitude of Irish plays good, bad, and extremely indifferent produced in the Abbey from the days of Yeats, Lady Gregory and Synge to now.

This is a detail. Mr Fallis rarely talks nonsense. He doesn't know contemporary Ireland as well as he thinks he does; he recites the old now-long-gone stuff about the Censorship Board, the Church, and other institutions. But if you want an informative, undemanding guide, his book will (as Henry James used to say of more taxing things) answer.

Arthur Marshall

Opening Bat

In The Lion's Den by AUBERON WAUGH
Michael Joseph £4.95

Alert NS readers, ever quick to respond to a literary and intellectual challenge, may care to try to establish the identity of the following person, whose description I have been compelled, for space reasons, to abridge:

> A taut, slightly embittered female school-teacher, possibly in Coventry but certainly in one of the less well-favoured areas, struggling valiantly to preserve in her charges some quasi-theological Hope in the socialist future. She is a convinced atheist and a convinced progressive in sexual matters although her own experiences in that field have seldom been encouraging. She approves of homosexuality and unmarried mothers, disapproves of drink and drugs, approves of education, disapproves of anyone excelling in it, approves, rather nervously, of the working class in most of its manifestations . . .

Well? A new woman novelist that we're all going to have to read? One of the more promising of the Wilson peerage recommendations? None of these fine people, dear reader, but YOU YOURSELF, if you chance to be female.

Mr Waugh, writing for more than one newspaper (he kicked off, 'making gloomy lah-di-dah noises in my own little corner', in the *Catholic Herald* as far back as 1963), always carried in his mind a certain image of the type of person he was writing for, and the [illegible] is the one he allotted to the average NS

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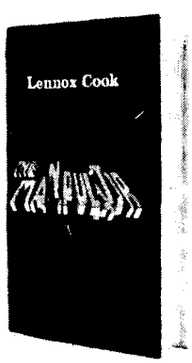

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MICHAEL JOSEPH

subscriber during the two-and-a-half years when he absented himself from the *Spectator* and, so far to the Right as to be almost out of sight, ventured into the lion's den.

The happy results of this temerity are now here before us in the shape of 50 of the First Person articles which he then provided. I find them beautifully written, highly stimulating, frequently hilarious and marvellously irreverent. Mr Waugh has had his little troubles ('My first reaction on being accused of anything is always to deny it hotly and see if I can lie my way out of it afterwards') but who could resist somebody who, in a piece entitled 'A Programme of National Recovery', suggests selling students of both sexes to Arab sheiks for their harems, and increasing food supplies by having surplus politicians and steel-workers eaten on a 'natural wastage' basis.

Nothing and nobody is safe for very long. The opinion of the man in the street is totally valueless ('We all know that anyone approached in this way thinks that Lord Longford is Prime Minister'). How deplorable was the inadequacy of the women concerned in those assassination attempts on President Ford ('Neither was able to hit a very large president at a range of five to seven yards'). There was Princess Anne's marriage to 'the poor, speechless, grinning creature who is now her husband'. There was that fatal moment when Mr Heath chose to exercise his vowel sounds on the words 'We in Britain have always been proud of our pound'. There was that 'ludicrous' book, Alex Comfort's *The Joy of Sex*, which outlined the marvels that could be achieved in the service of Eros with the aid of the big toe. When the government lavishes hospitality, why not print the menus rather than the names of those eating the tuck? Why not canonise Guy Fawkes as the patron saint of political activists?

In a more tender mood, Mr Waugh tells us, in 'Death of a Goldfish', of Marigold, a lone female partial to munching chopped mosquito larvae and won by Mrs Waugh as a prize for hoop-throwing at the Marlborough Mop Fair. She was found one morning floating upright and dead as a doornail in her tank, and, mindful of 'This English', I must point out that it is once more Marigold of whom I am speaking. She was, so to speak, fished out and much mourned.

> She lay like a warrior taking her rest with her golden scales around her, but her dignity rebuked us. There was no explicit reproach in her eye as we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead . . . but she never knew the meaning of companionship, laughter and the love of friends – or, indeed, the pleasures of sex.

We then consider whether male goldfish have nocturnal emissions and if so, how do they distinguish wet dreams from any other type of dreams in the encircling wetness?

In counselling, as I vigorously do, readers to hasten out and procure this spendid tonic, I can assure them that there is no comparison at all between Mr Waugh and the present provider of the First Person column. Though something tells me that not all NS subscribers are cricket buffs, it is to our national game that I fly for a suitable illustration of the deep gulf between us. Mr Waugh is the Boycott of this particular field of play, while I am 12th man in the 4th XI and only called upon (as indeed I was) in an emergency. If you think that I am saying this because I feel that I have to, you are wrong. I say it because it is the truth, no less.

Paul Johnson

Room Service

Life in the English Country House by MARK GIROUARD *Yale University Press* £10

In 1971 Mark Girouard produced a sumptuous volume on Victorian country houses, a mine of technical detail and social information. He has now given us a general history of upper-class country life, as reflected in the structure, embellishment and amenities of the house, from the early middle ages up to 1940. Mr Girouard is unashamedly nostalgic for a vanished, or vanishing, way of life; and the merchants of envy – which has now succeeded hypocrisy as our national vice – will not like this book. But it will give pleasure to all sensible people who care about art and the past.

The author is an architectural historian of distinction who possesses much broader interests. His theme is the manner in which changes in the social structure, the search for and deployment of power, and new notions of comfort and splendour determined the architecture of rich men's country houses. It is an idea which, of course, has been touched on by innumerable art historians. But no one before has developed it over so long a period, or with such clarity. Those who enjoy visiting country houses will find they can learn a lot from this book, especially about room-use and above all room-sequence.

As Mr Girouard points out, the grand country house, originally a castle or fortified manor, had its origins in power; it was the centre from which landowners dominated their neighbourhood, and, like kings, they survived by generosity as well as force. Their household was patriarchal, for the 'family' included retainers and servants. But just as, in the castle, there was an insoluble conflict between security and comfort, so in the household arrangements there was an irreconcilable clash between the need for pomp and the desire for privacy. In the end privacy always won: you could trace the history of the English upper classes in terms of the growth of privacy. Kings, soon followed by earls and lesser grandees, were ceasing to eat with their followers in the hall by the end of the 13th century, and so developed the 'great chamber' system, the real beginnings of domesticity in architecture. In time the chamber became too public, and further withdrawals followed, until the great man, whether king or noble, was to be found in the innermost sanctum of a long string of interconnecting rooms, arranged in ascending order of privacy. This determined the structure of the house.

The system allowed the dignitary to have it both ways: he radiated splendour along the axis of his state rooms but could still keep out anyone he wanted (with a backstairs for secret visitors). It reached its apogee in houses like Chatsworth and Blenheim, though the way their state rooms are now arranged will not make their function clear to visitors who have not read this book. After about 1750 this system began to collapse, when the rich no longer found it convenient to display personal

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power quite so openly, and at the same time gave their personal comfort and privacy absolute priority. Then follows what Mr Girouard regards as the golden century in the history of the English country house – the house-party, which survived almost until the end of his period, and the rapid introduction of luxury-technology. As he puts it, by the 1820s or 1830s, the English nobleman

> purged and refreshed after a visit to his water-closet and bathroom, reclining in his dressing room on a richly-upholstered sofa, reading the latest novel by the light of a colza-lamp and able, whenever he felt like it, to tug a bell-handle and summon a servant to bring him an iced drink, had reached a pinnacle of luxury which was the admiration of all his European contemporaries.

Comfort would have mastered grandeur, I suspect, long before, had it not been for the upper servants. Right up to early Stuart times they were themselves gentlemen. They served the great lord his victuals on bended knee, but otherwise they did little work, were waited on hand and foot, and often made fortunes out of their service.

The system of gentlemen-servants did not survive the Civil War (except for royalty). This cut down the pomp, expense and, to some extent, numbers. It also made it possible to banish the ordinary servants from the hall, which then ceased to be a dining-room, except for gala occasions, and became the entrance of the house, as it still is today. Thereafter, the servants got their own 'hall', and it became feasible to achieve a complete separation of what Mr Girouard calls the gentry part of the house from the servants' quarters. The house was then divided into two distinct sections, with the green baize door acting as a kind of Iron Curtain. It became one of the most important functions of architects to design the house so that the gentry could not be seen by the servants, or vice versa, except when necessary. It was also a bull point that the servants' wing should not be visible from the park or pleasure gardens.

One of the consequences of the rise of privacy was the introduction of women. They played very little part in medieval households, at least officially. The lord had to have a wife, and he of course begot daughters; each category was allotted women to serve them personally. But otherwise the household servants were entirely male. (The women did more field-work.) Female servants were to a great extent a 17th-century creation, as gentleman-service ended and male service in general became less profitable and attractive. The end of the old hugger-mugger and the beginning of true privacy, indeed segregation, was another factor. Once architects learned to design houses where masters and servants were separated, it was a small step for them to extend the principle to separating the sexes. Hence Victorian masters, who were very stern about such things, and whose architects were sharp-eyed fellows, were able to employ masses of cheap female servants. But Mr Girouard tells us why the system failed with the laundry-maids. For historical reasons, they did not come under the housekeeper, and the independent nature of the job, he says, attracted pretty girls. Worse,

> the position of the laundry made it easily accessible to outside workers – especially to the grooms in the stable. As far as sexual segregation was concerned, the laundry was the Achilles' heel of the Victorian country house.

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Derek Mahon

Never Entirely

Samuel Beckett: A Biography by DEIRDRE BAIR *Cape* £8.50

As the entire literate world now knows, when Deirdre Bair, an American scholar, approached Samuel Beckett to ask if she could write his biography, he replied that he would neither help nor hinder her. In the event, he found himself helping her (with introductions and so on) while insisting that he was neither helping nor hindering; and the result, the first attempt at a full-scale life of Beckett, is something of a coup. Beckett himself has said he wouldn't read the book, although he may be forgiven for sneaking a look. In any case, one can imagine his verdict – something simultaneously courteous and dismissive like 'a remarkably good book about a boring subject'.

Neither would be quite true. There are several complaints to be made, principally with regard to the author's literary style; and Beckett's life has been, from time to time, not only interesting but fascinating, like the singular personality of the man who has lived it. The most peculiar thing about Deirdre Bair's biography is that, while endeavouring to organise the facts objectively, to see the subject from outside, the book – or rather, the facts of its authorship and Beckett's unhelpful non-hindrance – has become a part of the legend it sets out to document. Bair, the privileged outsider, has in a curious way been drawn into the web. Beckett's passivity in the face of her intention has resulted, as he perhaps foresaw, and as the logic of their relationship demanded, in the book being written on his own terms. Exposed and vulnerable, he somehow remains in control; and the thoroughness of the end-product preempts any further attempt along the same lines for the foreseeable future.

His passivity towards the idea of a biography, and significantly one written by a woman, is consistent with his philosophy and behaviour. As a young man, says Bair, he was 'almost incredibly handsome' (some of the photographs bear this out, while others are decidedly unsavoury), and he seems to have spent a great deal of his early manhood neither helping nor hindering amorous females who wished to share his bed. In the case of Suzanne Descheveaux-Dumesnil, it was a question of neither helping nor hindering someone who wished to share his life, and in due course they were married; there are no children. This passivity, and the Oblomovian behaviour to which he has always been prone, have to do, we discover, with his conviction that he was 'never born entirely'. The phrase occurred in a lecture given by Jung at the Tavistock Clinic in the 1930s, while Beckett was undergoing psychoanalysis, and he latched on to it instantly. The whole matter of woman, motherhood and birth is central to his vision, and Deirdre Bair doesn't pursue the implications as vigorously as she might have done; but then there is so much else to tell. Beckett's earliest memory, he says, is of a dinner party given by his parents in their comfortable middle-class home in the Dublin suburb of Foxrock. He himself was under the table throughout the meal, not because he was interested in the guests' footwear, but because he was still in his mother's womb. He appears, however, to remember nothing of the conversation, in which he took no part.

His father, Bill, was a quantity surveyor – a jovial, clubbable man with a taste for year-round swimming, sport of all kinds, and large quantities of food, drink and tobacco; an amiable Philistine. His mother, May, in contrast, was a severe and possessive lady who wished to see Sam become a solid citizen, and was appalled and ashamed by his increasingly Bohemian courses. Beckett, the second of two sons, was sent to Portora Royal School, Enniskillen, becuase it was strong on sport, and from there to Trinity College, Dublin. So far so good. He was a first-rate cricketer and not bad academically; but at Trinity he started going to pieces.

Alcohol and Oblomovism began to make their appearance, and his career as a lecturer was a short and dismal failure. He puzzled his students (undergraduate girls mostly) by staring out of the window in silence for long periods and occasionally pronouncing a perfectly formed and entirely cryptic comment on Symbolism or whatever. After one year of it he sent a cowardly cable from Germany informing the college authorities of his resignation. May was furious, and from then until her death their relationship was one of mutual love-loathing and 'ineluctable bondage' – a phrase Deirdre Bair somewhat impertinently applies to his married life with Suzanne. It was not until the definitive move to Paris in 1939 that he was able to extricate himself from the psychological *impasse* in which he was trapped, and begin to exorcise his demons. The therapy was writing, the method compulsive monologue, the result literature of a high order.

His working life falls, very roughly, into three phases. During the first of these he did very little work at all, mooching around Dublin, London and Paris with 'a curious hunted walk, like that of a destitute diabetic in a strange city', as he says of a character in *Murphy*. He described his condition as one of 'baroque solipsism', his status that of a 'chronic emeritus'. During the second phase he sat on his anal cyst in Paris and was his own analyst, writing *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnameable*; and in the third phase, which he currently inhabits – the phase which began with *Waiting for Godot* – he returned to the world as an active dramatist and director of his own plays. He lives in an apartment in the rue St Jacques, overlooking the exercise yard of the Santé prison, and in an ugly little house, designed by himself, at Ussy-sur-Marne, with high walls and broken glass round the top to deter the curious. The three most important relationships in his life have been with his mother, with James Joyce, and presumably with his wife, a woman whose skill at self-effacement exceeds even his own, if we are to accept that he is genuinely withdrawn and not 'backing into the limelight' like T. E. Lawrence.

And why shouldn't we, given the evidence? I see no reason to doubt that he is a man of the most profound seriousness and sincerity; certainly he has suffered greatly, both physically and mentally (Bair's account of his psychosomatic afflictions make grim reading), and has watched others suffer. The world is full of fools: why should he suffer them too? On the other hand, when his old friend Thomas McGreevy, Director of the National Gallery of Ireland until his death in 1968, asked him to look after one of the Gallery's porters and his pal, in Paris for the first time to 'see the sights', Beckett, of whom they knew nothing, fixed them up and took them round the sleazy night-spots, matching them drink for drink and joke for joke: 'The holiday was such a success', says Bair,

> that the porter and a series of his friends made a trip to Paris and a visit to Beckett an annual event. He always had time for them, and seemed to enjoy it as much as they.

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intend no imputation of hanky-panky), so thoroughly researched, so sensitive (on the whole), and so packed with information, that to complain about the mis-spelling of place-names and such-like would be churlish, so I won't. Deirdre Bair relates the life to the work aptly and with a minimum of textual explication. She corrects a few misconceptions, sets the record straight on a number of anecdotes and epigrammatic attributions, and gives us a clearer view of the mask behind the mask. Her diligence will neither help nor hinder our appreciation of the work, but it will at least establish that the subject of her investigations is human – very much so. Aneurin Bevan once called somebody 'a desiccated calculating machine', and there is a residual tendency to believe the same of Beckett. It can do us no harm to be reminded that his strangled cry – 'the only way out of the tongue-tied profanity' – is that of a human being, of human life itself, here today and gone tomorrow: 'They give birth astride of a grave. The light gleams an instant, then it's night once more.'

Edward Pygge

Thribb and Embarrassment

So. Farewell then . . . by E. J. THRIBB *Elm Tree Books* £2.50

The poetry of Eric Jarvis Thribb is post-lapsarian, shot through with death. The apparent aposiopesis of his elegiac title is rather an ironic trinity of full-stops, resonant as nails in a coffin, each of them symbolic of life's inevitable period. Stop, stop, stop. We are arrested by the hidden imperative of Thribb's punctuation. Moreover, the fatal rib that caused man's downfall is incorporated into the poet's name. In this post-Edenic poetry, names no longer bless and individuate – they are significantly insignificant. Thribb on Dickie Henderson's OBE is typical:

> Your name is
> Vaguely familiar.
>
> But only vaguely.
>
> Dickie Henderson.
> You could be
> Anyone.

Thribb is, of course, the master of the line-break. Observe, for instance, how the name momentarily becomes Vaguely Familiar – *familiar* etymologically deriving from *family*, so that Henderson is included in the common human predicament of death, juxtaposed as the word is with *vaguely*. 'Vaguely' suggests not only a lack of definition, an imminent dissolution, but also the French word *vague*, which brings in its wake, its funereal wake, the idea of waves and their breaking on the shore of life. The last two lines emphasise the doomed predicament of everyman. And what a masterly line-break there! 'You could be' sets up an expectation of existence, a hypothetical ontology which is denied in the final truncated plangency of 'Anyone'.

It will be argued that 'In Memoriam

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Howard Hughes' contradicts this argument:

> But then. Does
> Anyone *really* die?

Though this seems to suggest (I admit) some doubt about the final nature of death, it actually implies that death is an ongoing situation.

One of Thribb's poetic virtues is his willingness to embarrass himself and his readers. There is, for example, a poem devoted solely to a shaming misprint. Silent emendation is made vocal. Thribb is also prepared to expose the limits of poetic imagination:

> My view is
> Far too complicated
> To explain in a
> Poem.

This, however, is only one kind of embarrassment, a bold shame for art in the face of life. But there is another kind of embarrassment in his poetry which *furtively* enacts shame: if we listen hard, we can hear the silence in these poems. Secrets exist in brackets.

Take Keith's Mum, for instance. All we know about her is the overtly embarrassing fact of her cultural limitations – she has vulgar taste in music and is unfamiliar with Ludwig Koch. Thribb conceals her surname in order to emphasise her maternal role. Suddenly, we find ourselves asking about the unmentioned (unmentionable?) paternal role. What about Keith's father? This is the question implicit in every mention of Keith's Mum. When we speak of the Thribbian grand style, this is what we mean – the ability to convey large areas of embarrassing information, like Keith's illegitimacy, in that superficially laconic style which is Thribb's imprimatur.

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Paris Journal 1937-39 by DAVID GASCOYNE
Enitharmon £4.95

> Minor poets, minor poetry, exasperate me. The real thing – which is so rare – or nothing! I want to be a true poet – one of those rare beings, of whom I can only think of five or six alive today – or not a poet at all, but simply a writer. – *Ainsi soit-il.*

Whose voice is this? It could be any minor poet. It could be anybody. For who has not, at one time or another, felt the urge to become a poet? And how easy it is, once that urge is felt, to fall into a daydream about being great. Once one starts thinking in terms of greatness, of course, one forgets about the actual writing which is supposed to earn one the laurels. It is better, for the daydream, to leave these matters vague:

> Have been reconsidering the idea of writing *A Man Exists*. If it ever materialised, it is difficult to imagine anyone daring to produce it: it would be so inconceivably brutal to the audience . . . .

Those four dots are the author's, not mine. They represent that sinking back into the reverie. Hovering around this little paragraph is an unwritten escape clause: and so, since nobody could possibly face up to the brutality of my message, perhaps I won't write *A Man Exists* after all – Good God! I am too far ahead of my time! The daydream can continue, untroubled by practical considerations.

David Gascoyne's Paris journal is a marvellous document, not because of any profundity of philosophy but because of the sheer familiarity of the self-portrait it presents. It reads at times like the *Diary of a Nobody:*

> Out of the discovery of the poetry of Hölderlin, and of Pierre Jean Jouve, and of the painting of de la Tour, and of certain Flemish and German 16th-century artists, particularly Cranach, and of the German romantics, and the *idea* of Rilke's Duino elegies (which I have not yet read), and the weather of the season . . . and the sediment of all the chagrin I have been through lately, – out of all this there rises a sort of ferment, and a desire to write a poem called 'Cortège and Hymn of Death', which I have already planned out.

It is wonderful to be influenced by the *idea* of the Duino elegies, in advance of a reading. As a matter of fact, even after a reading it is unlikely that one could be influenced by any more than an idea of them. But this is the poetical equivalent of tripping up on the carpet. A less honest diarist might have made out that he had read Rilke. Mr Gascoyne lets us know that what moves him is the ambition to *be* Rilke.

He considered himself, during this period, as a lone fighter against the English tradition in poetry. He would transform the art. Poetry was not verse, it was not rhetoric or argument or reportage:

> What I call poetry is not understood in England, but I believe it to be something of far greater value than what is at present understood there. The tradition of modern English poetry is really something quite different from the tradition of Hölderlin, Rimbaud, Rilke, Lorca, Jouve. – I belong to Europe before I belong to England.

This meant, from the age of 16, when he published his first collection, to his coming of age, when we meet him on these pages, that he was involved with surrealism, translating the French surrealists, campaigning for the movement, and producing poems like the one dedicated to Magritte in which we find:

> An image of an aqueduct
> with a dead crow hanging from the first arch
> a modern-style chair from the second
> a fir-tree lodged in the third
> and the whole scene sprinkled with snow.

A stock surrealist image. Note the unutterable slackness, though, of that 'modern-style' chair. Mr Gascoyne, as his *Collected Poems*, reissued by Oxford (£2.95), show, had learnt most of the surrealist tricks. He could write 'modern-style' lines like 'An arrow with lips of cheese was caught by a floating hair.' But he always found it difficult to avoid sinking into banality, or making surrealism ever so slightly twee. In this he was typical of the English surrealists.

He had another problem (which may have hastened his break with the movement): even though he had got there as early as he could, he was a little too late. The impetus was slackening and the limitations of the movement were already apparent. Meeting Tristan Tzara in Montparnasse one day, he is astonished to hear the founder of Dada talking warmly of Christ and the St Matthew Passion. Tzara tells him he is convinced that the age of experimentation is over. He adds, a few days later, that poetry must become human, or it will degenerate into pure byzantinism. Tzara has had enough of theories. He wants simply to express himself, without asking how or why.

Oh dear. It rather looks as if Mr Gascoyne is about to be left in the lurch. He attempts to recoup a little:

> Whether one theorised or not, I said, there still remained the fundamental distinction, which he himself had made, between *poésie-moyen d'expression* and *poésie-activité d'esprit* (which corresponds roughly to the distinction between the English conception of poetry and the French).

'Peut-être,' Tzara replies, 'je sais seulement que dans mes poèmes les plus récents il y a tous les deux.' One imagines the Englishman thinking to himself: 'Oh heck, in that case, what am I doing in Paris?'

What he was doing in Paris is expressed very clearly, and I must say poignantly, in the journal. He was pushing himself to the edge. He was living in poverty, he was aware that he might go mad, and more than once he mentions the possibility of suicide. All this he considers essential to the poet's life. He has the idea

> that the practice of magic (in poetry) involves 'damnation' (Hölderlin goes mad, Rimbaud abandons writing, Lautréamont dies abnormally young): i.e. the poet's destiny is to risk madness, despair and death for the sake of a possibility of redeeming existence by means of the secret power of the Word.

This then is the road that will take him from the daydream to the achievement of greatness. And he really does set out upon the

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road, leading a miserably lonely existence, earning a little money from translations, desperately borrowing the rest, undergoing analysis, occasionally enjoying a passionate, or a meaningless, homosexual affair. There are glimpses of Auden, Cocteau, Henry Miller and other writers. At one point Gascoyne announces with great excitement that he is about to be married to a German girl who wishes to change her nationality. We are given tantalising examples of her letters, but in the end nothing comes of the scheme. All the time, the war is coming closer.

> I suppose we are 'living at an historical moment.' As I write, Chamberlain and Hitler must be having tea together. Charming scene! This business of heads of governments stepping into aeroplanes and flying off to talk things over with one another may well start a new era in diplomacy.

That is a fair sample of the banality of Mr Gascoyne's political observations. He knows he has no gift for

> criticisms of policy, private comments on the actions of various governments and on significant facts and events reported in the press (not quite my line nowadays: the people on the NS & N for instance, should be doing this well enough).

Nevertheless, the *idea* of the war begins to transform the journal in a fascinating way. The writing becomes better, the tone is more excited, and the author tells us that he is passing through a crisis, a transformation.

It appears that the war came as a marvellous solution to the poet's problems. It roused his imagination. It took many of the decisions out of his hands, by bringing him back to England. It made him feel that his intuitions had been correct, and that a new order was about to come:

> I believe that this inner change will have to be, for thinking people, a change in our very habits of thought. I believe that this change will have to be, for thinking people, a change from the present (perhaps already changing) habit of divorcing the intelligence from the feelings. I believe that we must learn to *think with our hearts* ...

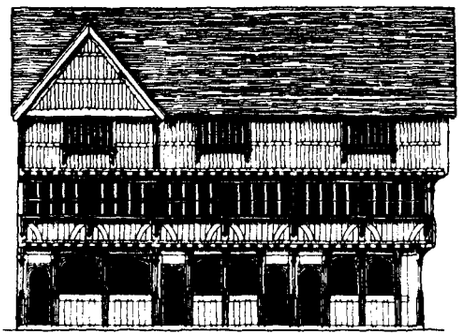
Typically for his time, he was driven back to Christianity. Untypical is the extreme force of this conversion. He comes to believe that he is nothing other than a voice crying in the wilderness, the prophet of the new Christendom.

> Sat on a bench in Leicester Square gardens, realising that I have definitely 'been called' to be one of those who are to announce the true underlying event taking place during this century; aware perhaps of being the only human being there, in the middle of London, with any idea of what is really happening at this time upon this planet, – perhaps the only human being consciously to wonder about what is happening or to care.

So he ends the diary with the intention of writing 'some sort of philosophically-determined prophecy' before getting called up for 'some form or other of national service'. He leaves instructions that the journal should be published in the event of his being killed in the war. In the meantime:

> The world is very deep, the War is horrifying; yet the Future of this Century has begun to burn with an extraordinary, unseen and secret radiance, which I feel I can no longer speak of here, since it has become my task to proclaim it to those to whom it has not yet appeared ....

Those four dots again. Mr Gascoyne has still not yet got round to telling the world his secret.



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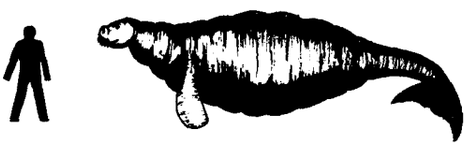

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Phillip Whitehead

Family Jewels

Honourable Men by WILLIAM COLBY and PETER FORBATH *Hutchinson* £5.95
The Night Watch by DAVID ATLEE PHILLIPS *Hale* £5.95

The CIA has gone public. With morale sagging after a long period of exposure both by the press and defectors from its own ranks, and three simultaneous inquiries by the Rockefeller Commission and Congress, Operation Candour has been launched. These two books cover the same ground in different ways. William E.Colby was the Director of the Agency for the two agonising years 1973-75; David Atlee Phillips was his Director of Western Hemisphere Operations until he resigned to go on the lecture circuit and put the case for the CIA. Together the books cover many of the most controversial episodes in recent CIA history. Colby ran Operation Phoenix in Vietnam; Phillips was in there pitching at every Latin American trouble spot from Guatemala through the Bay of Pigs to Chile. If they are going to be candid, they have a lot to be candid about.

They are at pains to show that they are liberal Democrats, each in his different way. Phillips, actor, journalist, and now novelist, abominated Joe McCarthy, he tells us, and voted for McGovern. Colby's ghosted prose offers few thrills but a dogged and decent respect for the constitution – at least, that of the United States. Kissinger's sneer at the devoutly Catholic Colby that he relished the confessional was not so wide of the mark. If any Director were to spend almost his entire term explaining the errors of his predecessors and the code he lived by, then Colby would be the ideal man. He has given us a defence of the role of intelligence as inseparably part of the responsibilities of the state, just as he installed a statue of America's first spy, Nathan Hale, at Langley to remind his shattered staff that they too were part of a great tradition.

The great tradition of the post-war CIA, however, includes deeds of subversion which even the Henty-like prose of Mr Phillips cannot disguise. He deals with them in reported conversations in which he takes the role of naïve realist. Here he is getting his briefing on Guatemala from his CIA superiors Tracy Barnes and E.Howard Hunt, who are outlining the coming coup.

> 'But Arbenz became President in a free election,' I said, 'What right do we have to help somebody to topple his government and throw him out of office?' Barnes ducked that. For a moment I detected in his face a flicker of concern, a doubt, the reaction of a sensitive man. 'It's not just a question of Arbenz,' he said, 'Nor of Guatemala. We have solid intelligence that the Soviets intend to throw substantial support to Arbenz.'

There are similar flickers of concern when Nixon pushed the CIA into its 'Track II' operation to prevent Salvador Allende assuming office in Chile, though both Phillips and Colby express relief that the assassination of General Schneider was not actually carried out with the weapons which the Agency had been doling out. (Other assassins got to him first.)

From the Bay of Pigs fiasco onwards the glamour of the covert operations side of the CIA had been fading. It now appeared, as Colby admits, 'a collection of bunglers, launching harebrained schemes and leading men uselessly to their death.' Roosevelt had got away with the overthrow of Mossadegh; David Phillips and his friends had taken care of Guatemala and Lebanon; now it had all gone wrong. From then on, under successive directors, the research and analysis function of the Agency was strengthened. Covert operations were played down, but they continued. President Kennedy urged the overthrow of Diem, in which Colby – who knew the Ngo brothers as well as any American – was deeply involved, and which he now believes to have been a 'myopic' act.

The Agency had been from the outset an instrument of the executive branch. Presidents pampered it; the press protected it; elderly chairmen of the congressional committees respected its secrecy. President Nixon, whose staff had their own interest in covert operations, using ex-CIA men like Howard Hunt, was able to order CIA Director Helms into the assassination game in Chile without let or hindrance. (No one will accept responsibility for the other bizarre assassination plots against Castro and Lumumba, which originated from Langley.) In Vietnam the Agency, through a sibling organisation, ran Operation Phoenix under Colby's direct control – though he argues that the resultant horrors came from the over-zealous military to whom Phoenix operatives turned over their information on suspected Vietcong. These things could not be hidden from the American media. As war-weariness and revulsion at the cost of the Pax Americana spread, so the Agency found itself open to public criticism and scrutiny; Watergate simply speeded up the process. The executive branch was charged with abuse of power; the CIA as its instrument was bound to find itself the target of the press and the Congress.

Colby is an honourable man. Before he became flak-catcher for the Agency he had followed his predecessor in accumulating information on every dirty trick ever practised by its operatives, with or without clearance. In other times this information, the 'family jewels', might have been restricted to presidents and senior senators. As press allegations against the CIA mounted, it leaked. Throughout 1975, Colby writes, 'I found myself called to testify before one committee or another two or three or sometimes even five times a week'. To Vice-President Rockefeller, to Senator Church, to Congressman Pike, he made his several confessions, about domestic surveillance in 'Operation Chaos', about the 'Glomar Explorer', about assassination attempts, LSD-induced suicides, and the dart gun which, he mumbled, was a 'nondiscernible microbioinoculator'.

As a result, both Colby and Phillips, and the whole generation who had joined the CIA as though they were joining the Knights Templars, found their colleagues asking 'What shall I tell my children?' They were heroes no more. The new heroes were the defectors like Philip Agee and the editors of *Counterspy* who took that peculiar American zeal for compiling lists and naming names in a new direction, until the assassination of Richard Welch once more gave America pause for thought.

President Ford made Colby a scapegoat and fired him. Phillips had already left of his own volition to take on Agee and Marchetti on the talk-shows. Colby was unlucky: he had tried to pull the Agency together; he had even got rid of the counterintelligence 'expert' James Angleton, who appears in the pages of both these books as a near paranoid in his fear of the diabolical subtlety of the Soviets (he believed the Sino-Soviet split was a gigantic plot to catch the US off guard). For his Vietnam days, Colby can argue that the Agency was never in favour of American military involvement of the kind which appealed to President Johnson, preferring to fight a guerilla war as the British had fought it in Malaya, and as the CIA did fight with some holding success in Laos. For the Agency in general, he sees a wide and continuing role in intelligence gathering, itself transformed by technology, with the operations abroad which supplement that technology placed under the clear directives of a new Act of Congress. It is left to David Phillips to spell out what this means: not just spying, but also covert actions in the national interest. Who decides that national interest; and what morality operates in the realm of *realpolitik?* In America the interplay of powers and the scrutiny of the Congress as it will in future apply to the CIA offer a greater hope that the decision will be debated than in this country, where Mr Colby's British equivalent regards even his name as a secret of state.

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Julian Barnes

Trick or Treat

Natural Shocks by RICHARD STERN *Sidgwick & Jackson* £4.95
Livia by LAWRENCE DURRELL *Faber* £4.95

Richard Stern, 50 this year, is the author of ten books, each garlanded with praise by his fellow-writers (Roth, Bellow, Cheever, Malamud, Mailer, Southern). Yet the handicaps he carries make it unlikely that he'll ever come into his rightful fame. For a start, his fiction has no desire to hector or bemuse. He writes an elegant, witty and self-aware prose: an obstinate and selfish attachment to lucidity debars his work from the attention of problem-solving academic critics; while his tense intelligence discourages holiday skimmers. His novels are studded with intriguing, unpredictable bits of technical, political and intellectual information; but the learning is worn shamefully lightly. His characters, unpopularly, belong to the cosmopolitan professional class: the sort who keep *The Penguin Book of Latin Verse* as lavatorial reading, and who get itchy if they aren't allowed to spend at least one chapter in Paris or Rome. Stern is Jewish, but this potential plus is cancelled out by the fact that he finds Jewishness only as interesting as a range of other subjects. Finally, he has the misfortune to be a Professor of English at the University of Chicago, and the podium there is already fully occupied. The result is that Stern, like Cheever, is comparatively neglected (not necessarily a matter for complaint – and comparative neglect in America is quite well rewarded anyway): and, causing no huge stir in the States, he is less likely to cause even a medium one here. *Natural Shocks* comes from his fifth British publisher; Penguin, in their declining years as fiction providers, have failed to keep in print *In Any Case* and *Europe, or Up and Down with Baggish and Schreiber*.

Natural Shocks opens with Fred Wursup, a successful, overweight journalist, hoisting himself on to his office roof high above Lexington Avenue, and realising he can make out the apartment where his separated wife still lives. Returning with binoculars, he notes how the new angle of view changes everything: how strange to be able to observe, unnoticed, the wife you thought you knew so well; to scan a part of your life which resolutely goes on without you. This craftily suggestive prelude introduces a novel of middle-aged visions and revisions, of stock-taking, of erotic pain, of *timor mortis*, of putting down the bags for a while and looking around, before philosophically trudging on, downhill all the way.

Wursup is a wry, engaging guide to his life, fears and lusts ('the eyes, lime-dense, flashed "go", though – he told Will later – "everything else in her gives you speeding tickets"'). The narrative, which sprawls a bit – this probably isn't the best Stern novel to start with – divides between Wursup's journalistic assignments (notably a think-piece on death, which entails a hovering, half-engaged relationship with an 18-year-old cancer-torn girl); his wife's work on an *I.F. Stone's Weekly*-style

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newspaper; and the fate of a top government adviser, a friend of Wursup's, who is taking a mid-life breather in (naturally) Rome. The adviser loses his political foothold; Wursup, cornered by a spate of unexpected deaths, temporarily loses his existential foothold; only the wife, thought to be repressed and sensible-sour, emerges confidently from the climacteric. She remarries, and Wursup, back on his office roof, follows her wedding-party: she seems different, slimmer, unfamiliarly dressed, unrecognisable. With such surprises, such unreliabilities in phenomena close at hand – for a man whose life is spent in professional observation – what price any certainties? *Natural Shocks* is easier to enjoy than summarise; perhaps it's best described as a novel about the onset of doubt, informed everywhere with Stern's quizzical mixture of sadness and knowing wit. It's entirely characteristic that when, at the end, Wursup invokes Beethoven's last quartet and the *muss es sein* on the score, he notes (is it scholarship or invention?) that the answering *es muss sein* is 'a joke about the landlady's call for the rent'.

Lawrence Durrell is a more fantastical, unflagging prankster: when in London for the publication of *Monsieur*, the first part of his current *roman-gigogne*, he spoke – in the tones of Terry Southern's Guy Grand – of 'making it hot' for the reader. Not without cause. That novel, or rather, the first nine-tenths of it, turned out, to the moans of deceived critics, to be merely a novel within a larger novel. Durrell had created the novelist Blanford, who in turn wrote a novel called *Monsieur*, which contained a novelist called Sutcliffe, who in turn had written a larger novel called *The Prince of Darkness* (also the subtitle of Durrell's work), in which Blanford is libelled under the name of Boshford. All clear (I've been simplifying)? *Livia*, second part of what Durrell calls a 'quincunx' (indicating that the novels are to be neither sequential nor, as in the *Alexandrian Quartet*, parallel; but rather standing apart and yet 'dependent on one another as echoes might be'), at first turns the screw a bit more on the reader. 'Factual' (i.e. Durrell's fictional) and 'fictional' (i.e. Blanford's fictional) characters mix and confer: Blanford and Sutcliffe have a long telephone call about, not surprisingly, the theory of the novel. It takes a lot of confidence to write this way: while in principle there's no reason why a doubly fictional character should command our attention less than a singly fictional one, in practice it can make the reader feel querulous, detached, a bit of a patsy.

Durrell's games-playing, moreover, often seems intemperate; there's a sense of looser authorial control; and the Quincunx, so far at any rate, continually invites diminishing comparison with the Quartet. It's not just that the type of characters – the Egyptian prince, the notebook-filling English novelist, psychopathic beauty, purple-black slave, beached consul – have grown familiar; this time round, they seem less fiercely characterised. In addition, Durrell's portrayal of passion easily slips into caricature: too often, it seems to be lazily conveyed by mere posh living – scoffing cherries while bathing in a lily pond, then driving off in the Hispano for a picnic beside the Pont du Gard. *Livia*, indeed, threatens to become a novel of food and topography. Durrell's opulent lexicon, his flamboyant asides, his rich, easy style and his bright local *apercus* ('It was the first time I had heard Provençal spoken – there seemed to b moss packed between each syllable') are mo convincingly deployed not at the service (ideas or even characters, but in the celebra tion of Avignon, that decaying papal tow whose twin patrons (trust Durrell to spot th place's dualism) are Petrarch's Laura and th Marquis de Sade. It's not meant as pervers praise to recommend *Livia* as a luxuriou travel book; but its liveliest sections deal wi the loucher quarters of after-dark Avigno Nowadays, Durrell seems more trustworth and interesting on places than people.

John Coleman

Gather Ye

Every decade since 1952, our own *Sight an Sound* has played the terrible game of the To Ten, inviting an international array ((arraignment) of critics to submit their lists (the ten 'best' films of all time, or the ten the could least do without, or whatever. As an exer cise – and I speak from experience – it is bot salutary and infuriating: concentrating th mind wonderfully. Anyway, having done i sums and published the results (*Citizen Kan* came top in the last two polls), *Sight an Sound* offers a bonus: the top twelve direc tors. In 1972, they were Welles, Renoi Bergman, Buñuel, Eisenstein, Ford, Godar Keaton, Fellini, Antonioni, Chaplin an Dreyer, in that order. It can hardly be coincidence that all these – plus Rossellin Bresson, Truffaut, Kurosawa, Capra, Flah erty, Griffith, Hawks, Hitchcock, Lang an Von Sternberg – are the chosen in Leo Brauc and Morris Dickstein's *Great Film Director A Critical Anthology*, a hefty, 778-pag paperback (Oxford £4.50). Of course, we ca still go on playing the game: the editors, their introduction, regretfully specify omi sions (Stroheim, Murnau, Lubitsch, Mi oguchi, Ozu, Satyajit Ray and Ophul because of the meagreness of 'distinguishe criticism' of their work. To these one migh add, at random, Dovzhenko, Pudovkin, Vi conti, Pabst, De Sica, Tati, Cocteau, Clai Carné and Wajda. But this way madness lie and it has to be said that Braudy and Dich stein – even if that excuse about paucity (good stuff on their exclusions sounds a b forced: they *knew* they had to stop somewhe – have compiled a fascinating and provocati volume, in which their own concise little intr to each director play a useful part. Briti critics contribute some 20 of the 90-oc essays, reviews and excerpts from books. E now, the reader, sated with so many name may have been lulled into missing a sad b true fact. Or the more knowing will rueful have taken it for granted. With the compl cated exception of Hitchcock (Chaplin we ca hardly claim), British film makers figure not all.

The industrious Roy Armes, in his new *Critical History of British Cinema* in th 'Cinema Two' series (Secker & Warbu £6.50 and £3.90), helps us to understand wh Basically, 'all the major directors of Briti cinema have had to find their own path b tween a degree of innovation which will re

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der them unemployable and a conformist mediocrity which will deprive their work of all interest'. Strong words, but he consistently backs them up as he traces the progress of our home industry from its beginnings with Acres and Paul in the 1890s through Hepworth, Barker and Pearson in the 1910s and onwards up to the unhappy present day. This is the most comprehensive and diligent survey of our native cinema to date, incorporating such studies as Charles Oakley's erratic *Where We Came In* and the mammoth research of Rachel Low on the silent period into a more ambitious framework. Armes is everywhere concerned to show the economic and 'political' pressures at work upon the individual director and he is not slow to praise a handful of genuine achievements: Robert Hamer, Michael Powell, Thorold Dickinson are sympathetically discussed, *Kes* and *Charlie Bubbles* (inevitably seen as poison at the box-office) particularly singled out as triumphs against the odds. Even Asquith, Lean and Reed get their good word: 'The cinema which these men created in the 1940s remains an important achievement. It was a genuinely national cinema, rooted in the documentary tradition . . .' But – a crucial and recurring 'but' for Armes – their 'unexamined commitment to a conservative and dated set of values . . . largely accounts for the ossification of their work from the mid-1950s onwards'.

For Armes, the story of British movies is one of missed opportunities and of a basic unseriousness or tacit avoidance of larger issues. Shelagh Delaney's one-off original script for *Charlie Bubbles* wasn't pursued by Woodfall; the famed documentary movement is summed up for Armes in Harry Watt's admission, 'We compromised'; Balcon, looking back on the Thirties, wrote, 'Hardly a single film of the period reflects the urgency of those times'; even *Cathy Come Home* fell down – 'the choice of a naturalistic style limits the impact to an emotional response and the argument about social conditions has still to be made'.

These severities of judgment occasionally lead Armes into absurdities. Hammer horrors are castigated because 'these films eschew allegory and *lack any socio-political scheme of analysis*' (my italics). But he is all of a piece: 'Free Cinema' and its offshoots similarly suffer from bourgeois complacency. Nothing but 'much wider cultural [i.e. 'socio-political', one feels] changes' will give the film 'the central position it deserves in British artistic life'. This may well be so, but – until that blissful day dawns – Armes leaves us, for all his excellent perceptions and delineations of the context, decade by decade, in which our movies have struggled to be born, with the stale old question, 'Why aren't they *better*?', still unanswered. Perhaps the last word should be left with Truffaut, in an epigraph to this pained, packed labour of love and despair: 'Well, to put it bluntly, isn't there a certain incompatibility between the terms "cinema" and "Britain" . . . '

Robert Sklar's *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* (Chappell/Elm Tree Books £5.95) is another extraordinary feat of compression, but with a couple of important differences: it concentrates in far greater detail on the business, as it were, of making and showing films: the great white-elephant movie-houses, the star system, studio in-fighting and government legislation, the growth of censorship and the fact that – in the early days – 'the struggle over movies . . . was an aspect of the struggle between classes . . . almost invariably masked'; and it effectively stops in its tracks ('The Decline of Movie Culture' is its last section) somewhere in the Fifties. There are some shrewd and suggestive juxtapositions – 'Hollywood switched to sound at precisely the same period that Soviet silents captured world-wide attention' – and the great comedians and Disney and Capra receive relatively extended treatment. What Sklar does, he does well and with a sociologist's eye for connections. But there is something abrupt and skimped in his conclusions: Coppola, Bogdanovich and Scorsese are cursorily mentioned on page 304 as hopeful portents – Altman, Spielberg, Mazursky might never have lived. Maybe what some of us see as a resurgence makes awkward news for his thesis: students, who will find much of this book invaluable, be warned.

William K. Everson's *American Silent Film* (Oxford £6.96) is a model of its kind and clearly the product of not merely thousands of hours in the dark but of genuine affection. (His acerbity is reserved, in an appendix, for *bad* books on film and for the ignorance and obfuscation of the structuralists.) Griffith is naturally discussed at length, but in the context of a lot of names now barely remembered. A handy chronological survey at the end offers such nuggets as, '1925 – Free entertainment provided by radio produces Hollywood's first period of real fear of outside competition'. Everson is concerned to show

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nothing is *that* new under the studio sun: deep-focus in *Greed* 'blueprints many similar shots hailed as revolutionary in Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane*'. A pity Everson should be such an ungainly writer. I lost count of the sentences beginning, 'Too, . . .' and of those ending in that dreadful club-with-a-dot, the exclamation mark. The author strongly recommends Adam Reilly's *Harold Lloyd: The King of Daredevil Comedy* (Deutsch £7.50), published over here in May, and with reason: excellently illustrated, it furnishes a descriptive filmography of some 165 shorts, less than half of which exist today, 'and detailed accounts of his 18 features. There are also five specially commissioned 'Fresh Appraisals', from which I appropriate this peach by Andrew Sarris: 'Lloyd's gags do not gush out of the warm, anal vulnerability of Laurel and Hardy.' Oh?

Too briefly recommended and, oddly, a pair that might well be read in tandem: Dudley Andrew's *André Bazin* (Oxford £7.25) is a pensive biography of that prime film enthusiast and theorist, incredibly – considering his influence on French cinema – only 40 when he died in 1958. Along with Rossellini and Renoir, Welles became almost a cause with him. James Naremore's *The Magic World of Orson Welles* (Oxford £9.75), the most embracing and persuasive account of the living legend I have pleasurably read, takes intelligent issue with Bazin over that deep-focus business and more. A commentary on the 1972 *Sight and Sound* poll concluded: 'The most potent word in the cinema, it seems, is still Rosebud.' Six years on, one wonders.

Zahir Jamal

Silt & Scythe

Lovers of their Time by WILLIAM TREVOR
Bodley Head £4.95
Esmond in India by RUTH PRAWER JHABVALA
John Murray £4.25
The Shadow Master by ELAINE FEINSTEIN
Hutchinson £5.50

We tend to forget that patience is an active virtue. It so often resembles something else: staidness, habit, resignation. Yet a contempt for these phlegmatic look-alikes isn't invariably accompanied by any great urge to tinker with our own routines. Common sense and the business of living make all of us, to some extent, lovers of our time. William Trevor isn't the kind of author to venture proselytising; but it's not the least of his qualities that he should risk the unfashionable and make fiction by renovating the commonplace.

Patience, his new collection implies, is the imaginative attempt to honour other people's time, a due owed on the tenderness we daily keep back for ourselves. Unsurprisingly, the payment is mostly withheld. Trevor's open, persevering sympathies go out to the unrecognised characters of time; ordinary lives shaped through silt and scythe and then forsaken or betrayed by failures of not-so-common understanding. But though his people look back over the England and Ireland of the last 40 years, there's no moistness about the steady eyes which look at them. It's the unimaginative interruption of continuing time's own alterations to which these chronicles draw attention. History for intelligent conservatives, perhaps; but no bad vacation exercise for silly radicals either.

For Trevor caters to no settled taste for accusation. No slickly adumbrated malignity defeats the progress of his characters' lives; only the uncomprehending entrenchments of the everlasting dull. In Northern Ireland an ageing schoolmistress finds the courage to give, quite literally the history lesson of her life; a horror story with a moral difference to atone for a career spent dispensing tame pieties. Time bending near its end to seed new times and then, as the provincial ranks close, thrust into early retirement with a presentation of Waterford glass. In London an 80-year-old widow has still to learn how to live with her dead. The composure she begins to manage depends on keeping the home and the rhythms she remakes intact. Time healing its own breaks; but then, with the intrusion of four juvenile charity-cases, vandalised by an obtuse experiment in community relations.

Only the most practised art could give these barely perceptible forsakings their characteristically unforced yet painful movement. Trevor manages the thing in nearly every case; in charting how across the harsh years of the last war, a young girl's fresh attachments slowly twist into an adult cruelty; in catching the meaning behind the absence at Christmas of a family's long-standing friend; in following a neglected child's gradual retreat

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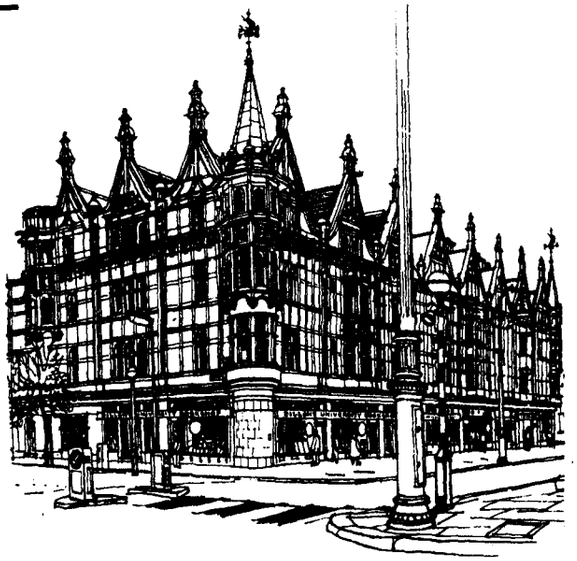

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into a permanent fantasy. Through all such knots and breaks of time a rare aptitude for patience is the unassuming form of Trevor's irreplaceable imagination.

No writer in English has stayed more clear-sightedly with India's changing middle class or rendered its mores with greater precision than Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. The reissue of her third novel gives late-comers a welcome chance to sample the lady's early promise. And it's an accomplished talent indeed that suns itself on these pages. We're back in post-independence Delhi in times seemingly more hopeful than any that city has known since. A sovereign confidence prevails in the busy chatter of Har Dayal's gracious family and in the correct domestic regime of his pampered wife Madhuri. For, happily, these elegant inheritors of the new state still have their cash and baubles. Unlike Ram Nath's folks who thanklessly beggared themselves in the cause of independence, Dayal's people wisely sat tight on their assets and now enjoy both freedom and prosperity. This agreeable situation naturally allows them to be highly cultivated; it was a poet, was it not, who said they also serve who only stand and wait?

Jhabvala fans will recognise a scene ripe for her unhurried wit. But while the novel's ironic sets the tone, it does its sharpest work through the story of their misfit daughter. Shakuntala would have any ambitious Indian mama choking on her *pan*. While her sloppy ways and innocent faith in the Beautiful have the marriage-marketeers stumped, Shakuntala attaches herself to Esmond, a smooth, bored dilettante stranded by the departed Raj.

If the bruising of ardent maidenhood now seems a routine theme in the literature of newly freed dependencies, its shortcomings are largely pardoned by Jhabvala's instructive scrutiny of the Dayal household. Her pointed comparisons of its enclosed softness with the disillusioned austerity of the Nationalists have a prescience amply borne out by India's turbulent career in social democracy. More telling, though, are her intuitions about a tradition of upbringing which coddles its men into sparkless nonentities; and which, by exacting a sacrificial conventionality from its women, turns its finest charges into damaged rebels.

The atavisms of Jewish mythology have long offered writers a handy supply of images for the black functions of faith. Elaine Feinstein's dark farce sports with a 17th century legend about a *donmeh* messiah to produce a stylish but unsatisfying interpretation of the modern lust for apocalypse. The plot sprawls out over Europe from present-day Istanbul after a young English tourist gets caught in a re-enactment of the story of one Shabbatai Zevi. A new incarnation of that cabbalistic visionary demands and gets the fanatical devotion of the world's soul-hungry disaffected. Feinstein's angle seems to be that just as the old Jews fled their persecutors by hiding their faith beneath new religions, so too our modern casualties of rationalism conceal their deepest inclinations behind an assumed scepticism. The appropriate messiah to uncork such drives is therefore one drawn from a culture experienced in disguise. And if this sorcerer's-apprentice psychology falls short of the complexities of belief and unbelief, it yet gives *The Shadow Master* an exotic form of grim comedy. As Britain and the world go Arab, it's no bad joke to come up with a tale that makes us troubled Jews at heart.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Kingsley Amis

Fit to Kill

Decline and Fall by EVELYN WAUGH *Chapman & Hall* 7/6

Half a century ago this month there appeared the first – what? Modern novel? Post-Great-War novel? Novel written for me, and not for some porcelain-collecting multilingual gourmet? – thereby degrading Aldous Huxley, who had been doing well in my esteem on other but related grounds. Whatever it was, it changed things. No writer could go on in the old innocent, docile way after that.

I read *Decline and Fall* first in 1937, when it appeared as one of the new Penguins, and have reread it a dozen times since, though not recently till just now. Doing so showed it to be one of those books that change in the memory, like Jules Verne's works and some of Dickens's (while George Eliot, for instance, is as steady as a rock). If challenged, till just now, to say what it was, I should have mentioned among other things satire, smart set, adventures of young Candide type among said set. The blurb of my present Penguin (1962) goes on very much like that.

I ought first to have allowed for the fact that any comic or would-be comic novel having to do with a profession, institution, social group, etc., is apt to be taken as a satire on it. But the word seems more usefully reserved for pieces purposefully deriding vice or folly. Looked at thus, *Decline and Fall* has no more than some incidental touches of satire, a couple of which, amounting to less than ten pages, refer to the smart set. Others dig in passing at trendy photographers and modern churchmen, i.e. surpliced atheists (yes, first published 1928), and more thoroughly and just as undatedly at avant-garde architecture and interior decoration. The Sports Room at King's Thursday (before its rebuilding the most beautiful Tudor house in England, naturally), with lights in glass footballs, furniture made of bats and polo-sticks, telephone held by a boxing-glove, is hardly funny at all.

The chief satirical strike is at Sir Wilfred Lucas-Dockery and his liberal ideas. This monster is introduced as Governor of Blackstone Gaol, where the hero, Paul Pennyfeather, is confined – after committing no crime, naturally. Formerly a professor of sociology (yes, 1928), Sir Wilfred institutes far-reaching reforms that are flatteringly written up in a periodical with the mysterious title of the *New Nation*. In the belief that crime, as well as being a form of insanity, is due to repressed desire for aesthetic expression, the Governor allows one of the prisoners, a carpenter turned religious homicidal maniac, access to a mallet, a saw and other tools of his trade. The madman uses these to decapitate the Chaplain, Mr Prendergast, an old friend of Paul's and the most harmless person in the whole story, naturally.

Few who know the book at all will have forgotten the hilarious and terrible passage, one of the most extraordinary in all our literature, where Paul hears of the murder from the words a fellow-prisoner in the congregation sings to the tune of 'O God, our help in ages past' at the chapel service the next day: 'A pal of mine what lives next door,/'E 'eard it 'appening;/The warder must 'ave 'eard it too,/'E didn't interfere./Time, like an ever-rolling stream,/Bears all its sons away./Poor Prendy 'ollered fit to kill/For nearly 'alf an hour.' And the whole affair is soon quite forgotten.

These events are offered as no sort of warning about what could happen when you turn a progressive loose; that might indeed belong to a satire. As it is, Sir Wilfred and his antics are no more than gleefully elaborated instruments of the cruelty and arbitrariness at the heart of the universe. *Decline and Fall* is a pessimistic romance presented as a farce. What has caused Paul to land up in gaol is his love for Margot Beste-Chetwynde, the rich, beautiful, veronal-addicted white-slaver and probable murderess who is the mother of one of his charges at Llanabba Castle, a rather unnaturalistically described school in North Wales. (The locals are all indeed-to-goodness-whatever and poncing for their sisters-in-law in a kind of parody of satire.) Paul's love is deliberately presented as quite unreal; his revelation of it to his colleague at Llanabba, Captain Grimes, sounds – again on purpose? – just like Bingo Little having the news wormed out of him by Bertie Wooster. The whole point of Paul-and-Margot, apart from bringing in King's Thursday etc., is to show him dropped in the shit and her, the real criminal, not only getting away with it and feeling fine about that but marrying into the peerage and in general flourishing like the green bay-tree.

Yes, Captain Grimes: short, bald, queer, with a false leg popularly supposed to be the result of a Great-War injury but in fact that of being run over by a tram in Stoke-on-Trent when he was one-over-the-eight, always in the soup and always climbing out again – Grimes is seen by Paul as one of the immortals, by which he means little more than that Grimes would always survive. That too, but to the extent that the phrase means anything he is an immortal character in fiction. *He* gets away with it because the gods would obviously not think him worth bothering to destroy. (Sir?) Solomon Philbrick, sometime butler at Llanabba and possibly but almost certainly not ship-owner, novelist or retired burglar, is a diverting creation, but I see him and his function less clearly; I also see him, very much unlike Grimes, without great clarity as a physical presence. Mr Prendergast, another Llanabba alumnus, plays a large part in the action; little Lord Tangent, superficially wounded in the heel at the school sports and later dead of what must be gangrene, reminds us that having only a walk-on part doesn't guarantee your safety.

No novel is a statement, and we should try to fight against making inferences about its author's state of mind. Nevertheless I will succumb to temptation by suggesting that the 25-year-old Waugh, rather than go mad or commit suicide, was in real need of something that offered an explanation of or an excuse for the horrors of existence. We all know what Evelyn Waugh found – to his artistic detriment: what had been an enlivening bitterness sank to defiance and jeering, a struggle against the unalterable and inevitable on the secular and social plane. *Vile Bodies*, that admittedly brilliant and very funny successor, most likely written during the process of his religious conversion, is in some ways a merely chronological successor. Mrs Ape (the name in itself) and her angels were a new, facetious departure.

Waugh's one great book is the outcome not, as Edmund Wilson put it, of regarding cruel things as funny because he didn't understand them. (*'Interviewer:* Have you found any professional criticism of your work illuminating or helpful? Edmund Wilson, for example? *Waugh:* Is he an American? *Interviewer:* Yes. *Waugh:* I don't think what they have to say is of much interest, do you?') One way or the other, what *Decline and Fall* is the outcome of is trying to make cruel things as funny as possible, because that is one of the very few ways of making them a little less intolerable.

This is the first in an occasional series of anniversary articles on 20th-century writers.

Television

Julian Barnes

Whupping It

Saturday Night People (LWT) may not be firing on all cylinders yet, but it has at least done one thing: won the Battle of Harty's Lip. The upper Lip has always given trouble; and even his loyalest fans have found the sight of the flowing conduit which lies due south of his cheeky nose more than a little distracting. 'Russell,' the money men must have said to him a couple of months ago, after the *SNP* pilot, 'We loved the show. Really loved it. You were ter-rific. It's just that we feel that what we have here is a sort of labial problem, if you catch our drift . . .' What could be done about it though? Could they attach miniature windscreen wipers to those capacious front teeth? Keep a constant jet of cool air playing on his face? (but what would happen to the quiff?) By the first programme in the series proper, the boffins were still stumped – and a drenched Russ was having to fall back on his basic finger-flick technique familiar to viewers of *Russell Harty Plus*. Yet by the second show, last Saturday, the Lip was miraculously cured, dry as a scapegoat's horn. You could have eaten dinner off the Lip, had you wished to, without the slightest danger of having your picnic gear washed away by a Niagara of salt water. How come? We can only guess. Perhaps the backroom boys had made a transatlantic call. Nixon's TV advisors, believing that the public associated sweat with insincerity, went to a lot of trouble with their man (not without reason – they had a whole Face problem, not just a Lip). They eventually discovered that the application of a little witch-hazel worked wonders, and allowed

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them to produce a dry, electable President.

If *SNP* can solve the Lip, there's no reason why it can't solve its other problems. Chief of these is that inherent in any gossip show – as in any gossip column, however malicious – of indirectly celebrating what you appear to mock. Was the coverage of the *Grease* and *Dracula* premieres anything more than free publicity for the shows, even though *Grease* was dismissed as rubbish (Travolta 'looks like something's gone wrong with George Chakiris' – Clive James), and *Dracula* – well, none of the team had actually been to see *Dracula*. White-suited party-giver and *Dracula*-producer Michael White enthused about the coincidence of the shows' openings nights – 'I can't remember the last occasion when two *enormous* things like this happened on the same night' – and the *SNP* team let such comments pass unscathed. Whereas clips of an evangelical Tory huckster (an excellent slice of film), of a sacked *Daily Mail* journalist, and of a pushy coiffeur, were followed by well-deserved snorts and snarls from the panel. What's the difference? For a start, Michael White gives nice big parties.

Otherwise, Janeh Sree-Pawer – 'I wenna pahee Dahning Sree celebray vofer wimmin' – the Lip and Clive James seem to be bedding down quite well, though there isn't yet the inter-panel repartee which made the pilot look so promising. But at least it's a relief (for those in the LWT region anyway) to have an excuse for not watching *Parkinson* (BBC-1) any more. On *SNP* at least the laughs are earned; switching over last Saturday to Parky, one could detect the authentic whiff of unearned mirth as Peter Cook and Dudley Moore, confident that, whatever they did, the audience would shriek and Parky would corpse, did just enough to keep both parties in that unselfcritical state. Cook did, however, raise one interesting question about That Baby (no, still not Esther's): when Mr John Brown as it were donated, what was the nature of his as it were inspiration? Now there's another teaser so far unanswered by Steptoe and Edwards. As Cook put it: 'Under similar circumstances I wouldn't have gone into that room with *Popular Mechanics.*'

The idea of parodying a soap opera sounds like one of those things that the universe simply doesn't need, any more than it needs a left-handed pan-scourer or a musical cactus. Maybe it was one's low and surly expectations that helped make *Soap* (LWT) so enjoyable; this, plus some well-calculated over-acting and a sharpish script. The 15 or so plotlines, involving adultery, homosexuality, murder, impotence and acne, were all quickly outlined in the first half-hour chunk, and a star of the series clearly emerged – Benson, the Tates' swankily chippy black domestic ('Boy' – 'We don't call them Boy any more, daddy' – 'What do we call them? Boogie?'). Benson is drawn with the current brand of generous liberalism: in other words, he constantly cheeks his white employers, and most of his lines are wryly knowing jokes about Being Black ('God said, "I won't give them pimples – I'll just screw up their hair" '; when offered some surplus breakfast to take home, 'We jes love tree-day ol' eggs benedict down in de ghetto – de li'l chillen use 'em for hockey pucks').

It's only the froth on a soapie, of course, but one wonders how this genre of TV black will look in 10 years' time; as quaint, no doubt as Poitier's squeaky-clean doctor in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner,* thoughtfully revived by BBC-1 on the same evening as *Soap*. But the most unsettling black performance on TV this week was that of Muhammad Ali. Not the Ali you might have seen regaining his title on Saturday night, but the one in an American TV commercial shown in Desmond Lynam's Sportswide slot on *Nationwide* (BBC-1). Ah can whup anything on two legs, he vaunted, but for things on six legs even ah need some help; whereupon the mammoth-trunked champ pulled out a can of something that does to roaches what the old young Ali once did to Liston. It was far sadder than seeing a slowed-down Ali being taken the full distance by Spinks; and made Henry Cooper's Brut adverts look like the work of an associate member of the RSC.

Sport

John Sturrock

Woodwork

A less diligent sports columnist, I tell myself, might easily have missed the BBC's esoterically titled bowls programme, *Jack High*. It took several seconds, and several of what George Steiner likes to call 'hermeneutic motions', to twig that this was a sporting term. I mean; Jack High could just as well have been some nascent rock artiste, his name simplified for mnemonic reasons, or the BBC could have been putting out a rarely realistic motoring half-hour to educate the mechanical dunces in our midst in how to change a puncture. But no, bowls was the name of the game, and the jack in question was the small white ball at which the genuflecting bowler directs his large, heavily biased black ones. This was bowls proper, played in the open air and on the flat, not the indoor kind nor yet that irrational version of the game called 'crown' bowls already introduced on the box, in which the green, absurdly, is dome-shaped and the players have to struggle to see the jack let alone hit it.

So, after snooker and then darts, television has engulfed yet another of our vulgar, sub-athletic pastimes. Wondrously photogenic bowls turned out to be; but *Jack High* was also keen to contradict any idea that it is an irredeemably lethargic game, only to be stooped to once any activity more violent is beyond our obsolete muscles. Seen in this light, the programme's title had good virile associations, and who was its anchorman down there at the seaside but BBC-2's versatile hearty, David Vine, who would surely never lend his hornrims to an event he thought too effete.

But effete it happily was, as bowls is meant to be. It was held in the safety of Worthing, a watering-place with more eventide homes to the hectare than any other conurbation in the known world. Nor were the two finalists exactly in the first flush, with the consequence that for propaganda purposes the camera took to cutting away to the incongruously unlined face of the third-place bowler, a mere child, but waiting to step one of these days into the veterans' rubbers.

The losing finalist was an American of many summers who followed each of his shots for two or three yards down the course in the same bent position in which he had delivered them. Good technique this for sprinters, who should not unbend too soon after leaving their blocks; but in bowling, and at a more advanced age, it looked risky: one waited nervously for him to pitch forward full length on to the brim of his panama hat. He lost to a brawnier and more modern man, David Bryant, known once as 'the Somerset schoolmaster' but now the next best thing to a full-time amateur bowler. Bryant made up for the creaking movements of his opponent by doing everything at the double, true to Vine's reckless description of him at the start as 'a fiery, all-action bowler'. Fierily he dusted off his woods, fierily he threw down his rubber mat to stand on as he played; and he grew fierier by the minute as the contest unfurled, strutting the sward with an Ali-like machismo when not actually launching his woods.

Fiery beyond all decency were his 'drives', a brutal shot one little suspected was legitimate in bowls. Played successfully, it cannons the other fellow's best-laid bowls right out of the arena. When the state of the game called for a 'drive' Bryant held his shiny projectile chest-high, aimed long and sadistically, then hurled it down so fast that the built-in bias had no time to take effect. Straight at the grass-roots camera raced the unerring missile and the American's woods suffered an abrupt diaspora, disappearing from view into the gutter round the green. The OAPs of Worthing slumbering in their deckchairs were brought well-nigh upright by these episodes of aggression. Bryant's victory was one for animal spirits and for spectacle, but it looked to me as if the more artful player had lost.

Liverpool's defeat earlier in the week by Nottingham Forest in their first Euroleg wasn't a defeat for art but it was a melancholy moment just the same. The football writers seemed bucked afterwards that it had taken another English league team to suppress Liverpool, whom the foreigners all fear. Liverpool went under meekly, as if it *were* a routine Division One match, not the first round of the European Cup. I would love to see them win the Cup for the statutory third time, like Ajax and Munich, before they sink back, and if they can get the goals they need against Forest next week they probably will. But they probably won't get the goals. Forest, though, don't look to have the weight or the sang-froid to win the Cup themselves.

Among this week's contributors:

KINGSLEY AMIS's new novel, *Jake's Thing*, is published this week by Hutchinson.

RICHARD COBB is Professor of Modern History at Oxford. Among his recent books are *A Sense of Place* and *Tour de France*.

DENIS DONOGHUE is Professor of Modern English and American Literature at University College, Dublin. His most recent work is *The Sovereign Ghost*.

DEREK MAHON is currently Writer in Residence at the New University of Ulster. His new collection of poems will be published by Oxford next year.

PAUL JOHNSON's *The Civilisation of Ancient Egypt* (Weidenfeld) comes out next week.

ARTHUR MARSHALL is currently making a new selection of NEW STATESMAN weekend competitions for publication next year.

EDWARD PYGGE worked for a short time on a long study of contemporary English poetry.

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Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Rooting

Sisters *Royal Exchange, Manchester*
Inadmissible Evidence *Royal Court*
Ubu *Young Vic*

For the second time in two years David Storey has set a play in a council house; and, if we're to believe the somewhat sensational reports he's filed from the front room, it's at last clear why so many local authorities want to sell their stock of semis to their tenants. Red-faced officialdom has deemed that the orgies incessantly occurring therein would be more properly hived off to the private sector. In *Mother's Day*, which the Court presented in 1976, those unlucky enough to venture into the family bordello were variously seduced, raped, mugged and robbed by those of their genial hosts who weren't making incestuous love upstairs at the time. In *Sisters*, directed by Alan Strachan, the erotic encounters may be less lurid and loutish, but they are considerably more systematic. A young couple – he, an over-the-hill footballer, she with no skill the Labour Exchange would be likely to recognise – have transformed their Axminster-carpeted snuggery into a cosy rendezvous for prostitutes and their clients. A prosperous operation it seems to be, too.

It can, however prove a puzzling place to the innocent intruder, such as Adrienne, paying her first visit to the family hearth for years. In she comes, to find a respectable and motherly next-door-neighbour brewing tea and tidying the doilies, like an enthusiast for cleanliness in any house in any Acacia Avenue anywhere. Then in drops a local schoolteacher, as casually as any friend might call on any other in any Laurel Drive or Laburnum Close. But a few minutes later, with no explanation, this boy is off upstairs with one of the gaudy misses who have emerged from the imitation-woodwork, and a sweaty, half-dressed policeman has slouched in with another of the same species in tow. Bit by bit understanding dawns, a process Storey chronicles with some humour. Indeed, with more humour than some of us had suspected lay behind that bearish Yorkshire front. As Adrienne pitched herself gingerly and prettily into a communal booze-up thrown by her procuress sister, I found myself laughing often and easily both at the incongruity of her plight and at her entertainingly encapsulated companions, especially Malcolm Terris's turkeycock bobby and Paul Copley's feverish, blundering teacher, a Chekhovian philosopher with overheated thyroid glands. She herself, incidentally, is played by Jennifer Hilary with nervy glitter.

But an obvious question was already pricking at my critical conscience. Was David Storey, of all high minds, content to leave us to cackle and crow at what was, it seemed, a rather fruitier and more upmarket version of *No Sex Please – We're British*? The answer came in the third act, but with a wrench of the play's steering that nearly yanked off its wheels. Adrienne turns out to have suffered the kind of retribution Storey regularly hands out to those who have wilfully cut themselves off from their northern roots. She's shrivelled and fragmented somewhere inside, and is presently on the run from an asylum. She had hoped to rediscover a sister and security, and instead, she's found evidence of that carcinogen that, in Storey's stark view, blights society, love, work, marriage, the family, everything. Inevitably, she's dragged screaming and resisting from knocking-shop to booby-hatch, the Blanche DuBois of dead-end Osset, Batley, or wherever this is. The play, as you see, has ideas in common with *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton, Home, Life Class,* and Storey's other dramas of disintegration. The trouble lies in its far skimpier control of mood, tone, atmosphere, feeling. By the end the audience, which had bounced out for the second interval, looked distinctly, justifiably puzzled and piqued, because emotions had been asked of it that the play itself had made it scarcely possible to produce.

Is Osborne mellowing, even before senility overtakes him? There he was in the Royal Court foyer, his blowsy, dusty beard giving him the look of a pre-season Santa, waiting to welcome the severer scribes to his excellent production; and, as if this wasn't enough, he had shown the spirit of Christian humility, or Chinese self-criticism, by reprinting several of their ruder notices in the programme. Let me complete this touching reconciliation, then, by reassuring him that almost one-third of the contumely is unfair, including that directed at *Inadmissible Evidence,* the dramatic peak which preceded his long, sad decline into terminal blimpishness. The later playwright would, I suspect, have invited us to share the protagonist's paranoia, perhaps even presented his liverish railings as a trenchant critique of the state of the nation. But the Osborne of '64 still had some objectivity, and the result is as magnificent a piece of characterisation as the British theatre has produced these past 300 years. To my shame, I missed the original production, having disobeyed Storey's first law by exiling myself from my roots, which are Tunbridge Wells, and removing to the frozen north. But Nicol Williamson cannot have found more in the rheumy, embattled solicitor, Maitland, than he does now because there have to be boundaries even to so rich a part, and no more is to be found. Rage, contempt, self-pity, self-hatred, compassion, a yearning to love and be loved, lust, suspicion, terror of a rejection that is also half-courted, a sense of impending dissolution, even a habit of unctuously sliming up to women, in a voice like lard: Williamson can swivel from one to another in less time than it takes to swallow a hangover pill or flick off a bit of dandruff. This is the middle-aged slough, in all its glutinous thraldom.

If I chose to ignore Jarry's careful instructions to the costume department, I think I'd dress the characters of the *Ubu* plays as overblown infants rather than desultory tramps; but then I'm not Peter Brook, a man capable of firing an arrow under his armpit while standing on his head and somehow striking the centre. *Père Ubu,* that child's-comic burlesque of power politics, is the more arrestingly and amusingly played by his Paris company, because it offers rather greater opportunities for visual bravura and audience contact. A large empty reel becomes first a throne, then a bulldozing war-chariot; some half-pulverised bricks represent money, weapons, food, and the perilous edge of the death-trap into which the nursery-tyrant shoves his foes; exploding shells are high-bouncing balls, flung about to the crash of drums. But the group's bilingual *Ubu Chained,* that gleeful attack on the Frenchman's idolatry of liberty, is much clearer and more cutting than I, for one, had expected. The visit ends on Saturday week. Go if you can.

Art

John Spurling

Curtained off

John Hoyland *Waddington and Tooth*
Paul Huxley *Rowan*
D. H. Smith *Fischer Fine Art*

John Hoyland and Paul Huxley, born within four years of each other, contemporaries at the Royal Academy Schools, both alumni of the 1964 *New Generation* show at the Whitechapel, both abstract colourists, must be sick of being bracketed together. Hoyland, the elder, is by now the better known. He is a bold, ambitious painter who has been faced for several years with what one might call the Tenth Symphony problem: how, when you have already pulled out all the stops, burst your colours all over the canvas, stormed across it with drips and spouts and thunderous reverberations of paint, can you keep the energy and tension mounting into the next batch of work? His solution so far has been to curb the riotous activity of his palette by shutting off part of the canvas with bars, doors or curtains of denser, more sober consistency. The best painting in the current show is actually called *Arras*. But now the surfaces of the curtains themselves have started to wear thin and grow excited; an alarming development, which seems to diminish rather than enhance the sense of energy, suggesting that it is not so much held in check by the curtains as held in place. Hoyland's problem has for the moment betrayed him into grandiosity.

Huxley's strength has always been his formidable restraint. One might have expected that the dialogue between those dark geometrical shapes – floating in mobile-like balance over a luminous turquoise, magenta or lime-yellow space – and the disciplined blocks of colour in the top right-hand corner – either drained off the dark shapes or waiting to fill them – would end with more colour, not less. But the six paintings in the present show are entirely grey, except that one of them contains a single, slim panel of rich blue. In this general extinction of colour — though the greys range in tone from white through bluish to black and create the same ethereal effect as the colours once did – the shapes naturally gain importance and transform themselves into figures. The dialogue is no longer between shapes and colours but between two kinds of figures, for the canvases are each divided down the middle and the poised structures of triangles, cones, squares and rectangles on one side are confronted on the other by purely linear figures: a tall T, a sort of spectral easel or, in

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the two paintings named after and quite closely based on Motherwell's famous *Pancho Villa, Dead and Alive,* a thick black oval on legs.

What is going on? Huxley says disarmingly, 'I wanted to bring back drawing and imagery'; but he has actually thrown open the rusty gates of late Cubism, asked us to look again and reconsider its possibilities. We have zig-zagged through this century at such a rate, starting up so many new avenues which we have then restlessly abandoned, that it must be time to walk back more slowly over the ground and see what we've missed. Huxley has symbolically put on sackcloth and ashes to do so, but there is nothing mournful or modest about the result. These are genuinely grand paintings, the more so for being at once cool, humorous and gravely beautiful. If the Tate doesn't buy us one to contemplate at leisure, it should be walled up with its own bricks.

D. H. Smith first showed his very small, exquisitely detailed landscape watercolours eight years ago, when he was still a student at the Royal College. They had an occasionally obtrusive 'save-the-countryside' message as well as something of Blake's and Palmer's vision of an English paradise. Later, having left London to live in Lincolnshire, Smith seemed temporarily to succumb to a cold-eyed, cold-hearted photo-realism. The precision of some of his new paintings – especially several winter scenes centred on a flowering sumach tree – makes the early paintings look almost impressionistic; but at the same time his visionary quality has returned in a subtler form. He has begun to concentrate on light and atmosphere as minutely as on trees, leaves, rocks and roots and the outcome is quite strange. Nature now appears to be the romantic and Smith the realist.

This English

Two examples this week of the ear playing tricks on the pen. 'Who' followed by a nominative pronoun (with its vulnerable vowel-sound – 'who it', 'who I') seems to cry out for an intervening 'm'. Recast the sentence, though, and you see that it isn't needed: 'whom were defending'? 'whom should be the candidate'? Then three very funny near-homophones. £3 for the first entry, £2 for the others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ The Sikh community in East London are campaigning against harsh sentences given to four brothers, whom, it is claimed were defending themselves against a racist attack. *Guardian, Page 1* (B. Munro)

☐ I remember the reaction of Senator Eugene McCarthy, whom I thought should be the Presidential candidate . . . **Piers Paul Reid** *Spectator* (P. Murphy)

☐ With the Chamber Orchestra, he has now recorded Rossini String Sonatas Nos 2-5 which are just the anecdote to a gloomy summer day. **Sydney Edwards** *Evening Standard* (A. R. Horwell)

☐ For anyone who wants to know about wages, working conditions and the like in Victorian theatre the book will be a minefield. **Michael Billington** *Guardian* (M. Todd)

☐ Vic's charm slowly discerns itself talking with him as he reveals a profound culture, captivating you with his words and charming you with his old world manner. **Jerry Bauer** *Man About Town* (G. Godolphin)

Films

Richard Boston

Waterworks

An Enemy of the People (U) *Classic*
L'Hotel de la Plage (AA) *Gala Royal, Marble Arch*

For a Puritan such as myself, going to the cinema in the day-time is a deliciously guilt-inducing experience. It is therefore rather confusing to do so in the line of duty. Can this be work? Well, I can assure you that it's not play. Hardened film critics may take this kind of thing in their stride but, for a beginner like me, going to the flicks at 10.30 on a Monday morning is a disorientating way to start the week.

The morning's offering was *An Enemy of the People,* starring Steve McQueen – if it was Steve McQueen. We only have the word of the credits for this, since the actor's face is entirely covered in long flowing locks of hair and a bushy beard into which he mumbles in a way which, though comprehensible, gives no clue as to whether or not the voice is Mr McQueen's. Remembering the piercing blue gaze of the Cincinnati Kid you might expect the eyes to be a means of identification, but Dr Stockmann's are hidden by glasses, and the lighting is such as constantly to reflect off them. Still, if they say it's Steve McQueen, then I suppose Steve McQueen it is. He looks more like Karl Marx to me.

Which is perhaps deliberate, if not exactly appropriate. Dr Stockmann is indeed a revolutionary, but of a most unmarxist kind. Unlike his brother the Mayor (played by Charles Dunning with just the right sinister sleekness), and unlike Marx, Dr Stockmann does not believe that the individual must subordinate himself to the general will. Indeed, he resoundingly declares that the majority is always wrong, a message we need now as much as ever. The job of a democracy is not to express the will of the majority, but to protect the rights of minorities.

The cause of all the trouble is the water from the local springs. This is believed to have healing powers, and there are high hopes of riches for all if the town becomes an international health resort. However, Dr Stockmann's analysis of the water shows it to be full of infectious bacteria. Stockmann's findings are dynamite. Their publication would cause a tremendous scandal, which would bring down the fat old bureaucrats and councillors who have been running things for far too long. On the other hand it would also deter the money-bearing visitors. To rebuild the water system would be expensive and mean higher rates.

The pressures against the Doctor build up. Ibsen's picture of the way in which power operates, and of the wheeling and dealing by which public opinion is manipulated, is brilliantly accurate. After the initial support the moderates turn against the Doctor, shortly to be followed by the so-called radicals. Unable to get his report published he calls a public meeting, which is immediately taken over by the same old gang of stuffed shirts.

Stockmann's point is very simple: the water is poisoned. The population finds this unalterable fact to be unacceptable, for it means that their wealth is built on poison, corruption, hypocrisy and lies. It is not just the water that is polluted, it is the people.

The play was first performed in 1883. Since then (as Sam Goldwyn probably did not say) we have passed a lot of water under the bridges. It hasn't got much cleaner either. Taking Ibsen's play on its most literal level it is every bit as relevant today as it was then – as one can see merely by looking at the way in which the Department of the Environment and the water authorities are currently conniving to lower permitted water pollution standards in order to prevent the embarrassing volume of prosecutions when the Control of Pollution Act comes into force next year. Taken more metaphorically the play is an acute prediction of what happened at the recent Windscale Inquiry. Mayor Stockmann's vision of a future of limitless material benefit for all is very much that of Whitehall and British Nuclear Fuels Limited. The Windscale objectors' disregarded evidence accorded with that of Dr Stockmann: the wealth would be built on filth and corruption. And the 'moderate' Aslaksen's declaration of Dr Stockmann as an enemy of the people is a fair equivalent of Mr Justice Parker's one-sided report and handling of the objectors' evidence.

Michael Lang's *A nous les petites anglaises* was highly spoken of; it must have been a great deal better than *L'Hotel de la Plage*, an inconsequential bit of froth about the French on holiday. If you want an idea of what it's like (and I can think of no very good reason why you should), first imagine Jacques Tati's hilarious *Les vacances de M. Hulot.* Now remove all the gags.

Laurence Lerner

In South Africa

The sun inserts its presence
In the busy garden, coaxing.
The soft grass cushions the heat;
Strelitzia nods and preens;
Poinsettia answers back.
Two men on chairs are talking.

> 'You live in the past, your head
> In the sand, you people are putting
> The clock back a hundred years.'

Poinsettia
Opens its red palms,
Its circlets of pudgy fingers.

> 'You want to destroy us. A people
> Needs its identity, fights
> For survival. We'll keep them down.'

Poinsettia
Lives in the present, opens
Its hands like a hundred clocks:

Extends its petals like knives,
Its branches like muscles; survives.

They argue as if the sun
Was listening.
The scarlet blooms
Lift themselves from the sand.

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Music

Andrew Clements

Heavy Breathing

The Proms *Albert Hall/Radio 3*

Michael Tippett has never been content to write music merely to celebrate the felicity of his own invention. The importance of giving his works an extra-musical charge has been responsible for much of their peculiar richness of imagery and reference, but it has also led him to confront some seemingly refractory problems. *The Ice Break,* first performed at Covent Garden last year, stands or falls on whether the listener is prepared to accept its preoccupations as appropriate subject matter for an opera; the third Symphony attempts a 20th-century treatment of the problems posed by the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, yet provides its response at the expense of overall coherence.

It's hardly surprising then, that the Fourth Symphony, introduced to London by Solti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in the first of their two Proms appearances, should also overlay its single-movement form with an explicit programme. Tippett would seem the least likely of contemporary composers to write a latter-day *Ein Heldenleben,* but he has described his new symphony as a 'birth-to-death piece', and furnished the opening and close of the work with images of almost Straussian literalness. The shuddering opening figures which only gradually achieve some sort of momentum were apparently suggested by the remembrance of some film of foetal development that Tippett saw in the Twenties, in which the speeded-up cell division proceeded in a series of shakes; the gasps with which the symphony ends are the most obvious use of a sound that haunts the work, originally simulated by a wind machine but now by electronic amplification of authentic heavy breathing.

However, these rather crude devices serve only as a frame for a cogent musical argument that is essentially abstract, even though in the score its main themes carry labels such as 'power', 'vigour' and 'lyric grace'. A single-movement work incorporating the elements of multi-movement form is a new formal departure for Tippett, and he plans to use it in a forthcoming string quartet and a triple concerto for string trio and orchestra. Yet even at a first attempt the form is intricate. The elements of a sonata form embrace a conventional slow movement and scherzo and trio; the sonata recapitulation also serves as finale. Each section is preceded by a recomposed statement of the sumptuous horn motif with which the symphony begins and its last restatement overflows into the work's coda.

Most of the loose ends of such a structure are neatly tied up or at least cauterised; Tippett's music has long since done away with the need for transitions between dissimilar blocks of material. Development in the Fourth Symphony proceeds more in the manner of a 17th-century fantasia than of a classical symphony, elaborating and extending the themes rather than subjecting them to close motivic reworking. The cast of the themes and the bravura of the orchestral writing suggest that Tippett was inspired by the astonishing virtuosity of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The themes are also characterised by their scoring – 'power' for the brass, 'vigour' for the strings, 'lyric grace' for woodwind. There seems much more of a sense of display in this work than there is in Tippett's Concerto for Orchestra of 1962; and in this obvious delight in orchestral writing lies much of the Fourth Symphony's attractiveness.

But it ceases to be a convincing symphonic argument at very much the same point in its structure as the Third Symphony does. In the Third, Tippett's answer to the question implied by Beethoven/Schiller is to launch into a sequence of blues for soprano and orchestra. And because these settings relate more to the 'Ode to Joy' than to the purely instrumental first part of his symphony, Tippett tries to create internal coherence by reintroducing themes from the first part, to be 'coloured' by association with the blues. Similarly in the Fourth: at the expected climax of the recapitulation the principal themes of the slow movement and the scherzo are 'remembered'; it may perhaps be justified by the programme – the old 'hero' reliving past glories – but it cannot be an adequate substitute for a clinching finale. In structural terms the effect is to bring the work's centre of gravity forward into the main development section; everything after that then seems to be an anti-climax. Comparison of the Albert Hall performance with tapes of last year's Chicago premiere suggests that Solti has adopted his characteristic approach to a work – first extracting its excitement and only later coming to terms with its lyricism. Certainly the Proms performance was the more expansive, and consequently the better proportioned.

Weekend Competition

No 2533 **Set by A. Boteman**

There are two famous modern literary Quartets, one by Eliot and one by Durrell. What if they'd each written the other's? Extracts, please, from either version, by 6 October; 150 words or up to 16 lines.

Result of No 2530 **Set by Snubbin**

Auden wrote that 'Poetry makes nothing happen'. We asked for news reports proving the contrary.

Report **by Len the Unlucky**

Where is the great Tim Hopkins? The talented, reliable and by now rather rich Tim Hopkins? This is the cry which echoes round the Complex sorting-office as the morning sackloads are disgorged. Perhaps his entry will come winging in from some Bacardi locale, the envelope festooned with rainbow stamps. Perhaps he is in Switzerland. Perhaps there will be a telegram. . . Each morning the sorters duck and snatch at likely envelopes, but so far, no dice. O Hopkins, in what have we offended? As for the rest of you, a pretty good response to a comp which we thought might produce some classic entries. Ah well; seven pounds each and God bless you all.

Colour it cherry-red and call it Death-Wish Valley – that's the message as Spring comes to the sleepy county of Shropshire.

Cherry trees blossom as murder and suicide rates spiral and hundreds of young men join the Forces daily.

Shrewsbury's recruiting officer said yesterday: 'Many applicants say they will sign on only if they can be posted to Crossmaglen.'

They blame the local girls. 'The birds bugger us about,' one disgruntled Shropshire lad told me in Ludlow's swinging Land of Lost Content disco last

Tony Miles

Chess

No 101 **July Problems**

The July problems were an unusually straightforward set, basically because I hadn't come across any interesting new positions. To those solvers who prefer more of a challenge I apologise; normal difficulties will be resumed as soon as possible.

Problem 90 (r1bk1b1Q / 1ppn3p / p4np1 / qB6 / 3P4 / N1P4P / PP1B1PP1 / 4R1K1) was elegant, but scarcely demanding. In fact it came from a game I played in a recent simultaneous display. White mates in 4 by 1.QxBch! NxQ; 2.R-K8ch! NxR; 3.B-N5ch, N-B3; 4. BxNmate.

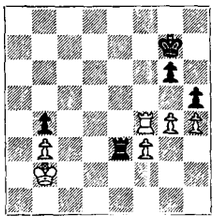
Problem 91 (r2r2k1 / p1q1bp2 / 3p2pB / 3bp1Q1 / 1p2P3 / 1B6 / PPP3PP / 3R1RK1) was a little harder: 1.R-B6! (Not 1.RxP? Q-N3 (or B4)ch winning for Black) and if a) 1 . . .BxB; 2. RxPch, K-R1 (If K-R2; 3.R-R7ch, K-R1; 4.R-R7ch, KxR; 5.Q-N7 mate) 3.B-N7ch, K-N1; 4.B-B6ch, PxR; 5.QxPch, K-B1; 6.B-N7ch, K-N1; 7.B-R6ch, K-R1; 8.Q-N7 mate.

b) 1 . . . BxP; 2.RxPch mating similarly.

c) 1 . . .K-R2; 2.BxB, BxR; 3.QxB, KxB; 4.R-Q3 wins.

Problem 92 (r2q1rk1 / pp2pp2 / 3pb3 / 3Qb2R / 4P1p1 / 1BN1Bn2 / PPP2P2 / 2K4R) was the lengthiest. There were 'twin' solutions. Either 1.R-R8ch, K-N2; (If BxR, Q-R5 forces mate) 2.R(8)-R7ch, K-N1; 3.QxB! 4.PxQ, BxPch; 5.R-B2, BxRch; 6.K-B1. B-R6ch; 7.B-N2, RxB etc. as I gave, or 1.R-R8ch, K-N2; 2.R(1)-R7ch, K-N3; 3.R-R6ch, K-N2; 4.R(8)-R7ch, K-N1; 5.QxB! PxQ; 6.BxPch, R-B2; 7.BxRch, K-B1; 8.R-N6 wins easily.

The last, **Problem 93 (6K1/8/7p/8/k7/2B5/1P6/8)** was a familiar Reti-type study. **1.K-B7** (intending K-N6xP) **P-R4; 2.K-K6!** (again threatening to catch the pawn) **P-R5; 3.K-Q5! P-R6; 4.K-B4! P-R7; 5.B-N4!** (the point) **P-R8=Q; 6.P-N3 mate.** Owing to the simplicity of the problems, any slight analytical mistakes or omissions were penalised. Top prizewinners were Messrs Garfath, Allen, Kwiatkowski, Sobey, McSheehy and Taylor (£5 each) closely followed by Abrahams and Bax (£4 each) Sahasrabudhe and Burn (£3 each) and Anantha Swamy, Ram Mohan and Deshmukh (£2 each).



Problem 101
Black to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the New Statesman postmarked not later than 4 October.

Solution to Problem 99
1.BxP! KxB (Alternatives are hopeless) 2.N-K5ch! N-N4; 3.Q-B7ch, K-R1: 4.N-N6ch! PxN; 5.R-R3ch! NxR; 6.PxP, N-N4; 7.P-N7ch, Resigns.

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night. 'Playing blokes off against each other and that. There's knife fights here every night.'

With so many young Salopians murder or suicide victims, serving life sentences or away in the Forces, the birth rate has fallen dramatically.

Shropshire may soon be known as the Deserted County. IAN SAINSBURY

Ron Endaway, shepherd of the hills at Malvern, looked very sheepish as he stood in the dock yesterday, charged with rape.

Miss X, aged 14, denies having made sheeps' eyes at him. She told the court Endaway had lured her to some rocks with sweet talk.

'He said he wanted me to live with him and be his love, but he was only after the one thing.'

Ron, she alleged, had tried to pull the wool over her eyes with a flock of promises. These included fragrant posies, a straw belt with amber studs and a table made of solid ivory. He also said he would make her an embroidered kirtle.

But he didn't do any of these things, according to Miss X. Instead, she alleges, Ron proved to be a bit of a ram.

The case continues. NAOMI MARKS

Locals are puzzled by a sudden influx of self-sufficiency-seekers to a lake island in the Irish outback.

More puzzling still, the good-lifers seem to have a strangely identical set of priorities, though they deny any previous knowledge of one another's intentions or any copy-catting.

Each newcomer – they come singly – has built himself a small clay and wattle cabin, planted nine rows of beans and installed a beehive; each is obsessed with sound, colour, peace like some latter-day hippie: each even claims to have heard the lapping of these waters, these droning bees, singing crickets, winging linnets in far-away city streets. They go on about lit-up nights and purpled noons, too.

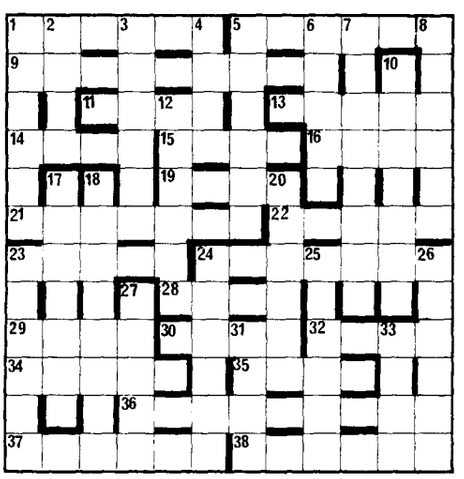
Can they have been attracted to Innisfree by some particularly intoxicating brand of 'Morning Dew'? If so, no-one's telling! MAY DAY

Hordes of young vandals continued yesterday to descend like locusts on Britain's parks and gardens, stripping rosebushes of their buds. Hampton Court's head gardener, Mr Fred Potts (53), who lost thousands of buds in yesterday's raids, could offer no explanation. 'They looked an educated class of person, not your usual yobbo,' he said. 'Some were even waving books.' Private rosegrower Mr Sid Mould (53) of Harrow, whose blooms regularly win awards, told reporters: 'I'm sick as a parrot. The blighters stripped my Ena Harkness. The wife says we should get an alsatian.' A spokesman for the Red Cross (53) appealed urgently for blood donors to meet increased demand for transfusions following multiple thorn injuries. Meanwhile, sociologists at Essex University are seeking Home Office funds for a research project entitled 'Rosebud gathering – an existential response to gerontophobic alienation?' R. D. CONDON

The date for the opening of the controversial new town being built in the centre of Bradford has finally been fixed, *writes our Yorkshire correspondent.* The architect, George Higgins, formerly well-known as a long-distance country rambler, has extravagant plans for the ceremony. These are said to include the entry of Mr Higgins in a blazing car, the minting of gold darts for use in the new recreation centre, and the cutting of a ribbon by Mr Higgins with the sword he has been eccentrically wearing throughout the town's construction. At a crowded press conference, Mr Higgins announced that the new town would be called Jerusalem. WILL BELLENGER

Salamanca 10: 'Adverse'

PRIZES. Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 10, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 3 October.



Unclued answers are of a kind, and their unchecked letters are BDEEEEEHHLNOOOOUW. Each line of verse contains a definition (one word or more) and a hidden or otherwise jumble of the answer. 27 consists of two words.

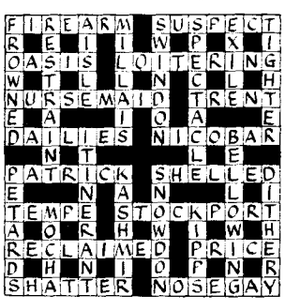
ACROSS

1 Within the spider's net dew's rainbow becks
9 Laputian fate to some besotted fly
11 Which o'er the cabin's fabric idly treks –
13 No warning there for him! – a lark's bold cry
14 Will not defeat the fat beast lurking near
15 In stripy dress who plans to be replete,
16 No notion that the diamond-patterned spear,
19 Weird opaque-eyed strange creature without feet,
21 Will be the gleaner next, and join again
22 Nature's design – the grasses bow and beg –
23 The final part is done, victor is slain
24 By wolflike predator – the tiny egg,
28 Abandoned now, and crushed to milk, thick, old,
29 Smeared on a plant in an unsmiling birth,
30 When sweet larks have departed o'er the spruce –
34 A yardstick for the curses of the bold,
35 Life as a stake gambled against an earth
37 That couldn't care – flouting its vital juice
38 For galley-man or bard equally loose.

DOWN

2 At any time in Autumn one can drink
4 The swelling stream who bubbles like a flute
5 As if he has a job waxing the sink
6 Of silence – here is budding winter fruit –
8 Wind-demons dance for wanderers, I think –
10 Deformed by frost, at liberty to boot.
12 My Persian vine has an Icarian droop:
17 Crows desperately dare turn every stone:
24 The spiked stream-ice in which buff lizards group:
25 Our breath sharp as a big gun's painful groan:
26 Walk's active once both feet are widely spread: –
27 Autumn, broken to Winter, is now dead,
33 And every streak raised on the lawn is red!

Solution to No 1275



Prizewinners to No 1275

E.R.A. McDonald (Glasgow)
Mrs M. Daggers (London EC1)
G.C. Counsell (Gloucester)

Accom. Vacant

PROFESSIONAL person, late 20s, wanted to share modern house in Woking. 28 mins Waterloo. £60 per month. Share bills. Ring Woking 69583 before 9 p.m.

REDUCED RENT for childminding for working single mother. 2 rooms, k. & b. Fulham off King's Road. Suit at home parent. 731 0392.

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APEX

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Poem by Laurence Lerner

Theatres

ALDWYCH THEATRE (Royal Shakespeare Company) 836 6404 Info 836 5332. Premiere David Mercer's 'Cousin Vladimir' in repertoire with 'As You Like It'. See daily press for dates and times. RSC also at The Warehouse in premiere Stephen Pollakoff's 'Shout across the River' and Pete Atkin's 'A & R'.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE. 722 9301. Nightly at 8 p.m. Sat. 5 & 8 p.m. 'Gloo Joo' by Michael Hastings.

NATIONAL THEATRE. 928 2252. Olivier 'The Double Dealer' (prevs from 22 Sept); Lyttleton 'The Philanderer' and 'Plenty'; Cottesloe promenade season 'Lark Rise'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 928 2256.

ROYAL COURT. 730 1745. Eves 8, Sats 5 & 8.30. Nicol Williamson in John Osborne's 'Inadmissible Evidence'.

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Meetings

SHAW SOCIETY. Audrey Williamson on 'Bernard Shaw & William Morris'. Friday 29 September at Conway Hall, WC1. Coffee 6.30 p.m. Lecture 7 p.m.

GHALIB POETRY SOCIETY. For lectures and meetings on the poet of the east. *Ghalib, write the Secretary, S. H. Irfan,* 2 Stagshaw House, Pytchley Rd, London SE22.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE, Blind Lane, Bourne End, Bucks. Sun. 24 Sept. Swami Bhaskarananda (Guest Speaker) at 4 p.m. All welc. Vedanta mag. 50p.

THEOSOPHY. Informal Forum on Basic Theosophy, Sun. 24 Sept. 8 p.m. All welcome. S.a.e. free pamphlet, talks programme, booklist. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2.

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